

WORDS ON THE AIR

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PREFACE

BETWEEN 1938 and the end of the war in 1945 it was my privilege to talk on 'World Affairs' in the Empire and Oversea Services of the B.B.C. to many listeners in five continents. From December 1939 onwards these talks were given every week, with only two interruptions of three weeks each in 1940 and 1941. They went out on short wavelengths. Not a few listeners in Australia, New Zealand, India, Canada, Africa, the United States and Central and South America have asked that the talks might be printed and published as a permanent record. The same wish was expressed by British listeners who were able to hear them on a medium wavelength in 1944 and 1945. For several reasons I doubted whether it would be feasible or expedient to respond to this wish. The scripts of the talks were written for oral delivery, not for perusal. The impression made upon the ear by the spoken word may differ from that conveyed through the eye by the printed word. I felt that the voice and its modulations might have been as much a part of my *Words on the Air* as was the text of the script itself. The 'words' were also addressed to large numbers of listeners with a limited knowledge of English. Simplicity of style and clearness of diction were therefore essential. So there was room for doubt whether eventual readers of a printed text would regain from it the satisfaction they may have felt in the atmosphere of war when they heard the familiar tones of a speaker whose judgment they had learned to trust.

Nor was this the only reason for doubt. Since the scripts were interpretations rather than chronicles of events they could not form a strictly historical record. Selections from them, or summaries of their main features, could scarcely do duty for the talks themselves as they actually went out in five separate transmissions to the ends of the earth; and shortage of paper must put the publication of all of them out of the question.

Before deciding whether or not to publish most or all of them I tried an experiment. Every writer knows the difference between a manuscript written at moments of tension or with strong feeling and the same manuscript when it has grown 'cold' and is read with a critical eye. So I re-read all the copies of my scripts consecutively, as though they had been written by another hand, in the expectation that few of them would pass the test and appear to deserve the dignity of print. To my surprise and, I admit, to my gratification, most of them passed the test far better than I thought they would. Yet it was another consideration, which had not before occurred to me, that ended by tipping the balance in favour of some form of publication.

In the process of re-reading I found that the scripts no longer seemed to be disjointed efforts to interpret the meaning and the course of events before and during the war but appeared rather like a series of mental snapshots, taken at the time, and amounting almost to a psychological film of more than fleeting interest. No retrospective attempt to conjure up the atmosphere of the war years could, I reflected, possess quite the same degree of contemporary authenticity. And since, to the best of my knowledge and belief, no other British broadcaster had taken so long a series of 'snapshots' my initial hesitation resolved itself into doubt of another kind—doubt whether I should do right to leave my 'film' unpublished.

This second doubt must be my apology for the present volume. Should listeners, overseas and at home, think the apology adequate, two subsequent volumes, containing the scripts for 1941-3 and 1943-5, will presently be issued. Any merit these volumes may claim will not be mine alone. To the encouragement and help of the B.B.C.'s overseas staff they will owe much. The late Mrs. Ormond Wilson (*née* Margery Wace) who invited and urged me

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to begin them in 1938, I shall ever remember with affectionate gratitude. To her husband, Ormond Wilson, I am almost equally indebted; while Mr. Norman Collins, Mr. J. B. Clark, Mr. Anthony Weymouth and, in the later years, Mr. Tahu Hole, gave me valued counsel and guidance. Nor can I refrain from acknowledging the gallant service of my secretary, Miss D. F. Jones, who, in fair weather and foul, undeterred by 'blitz' and black-out, flying bombs or V2 rockets, never left London and never failed to take down my musings or to ease the work of B.B.C. departments by supplying duplicate scripts in abundant measure.

The contents of these volumes are therefore the outcome of many-sided co-operation. They are a collective product, not by any means an individual undertaking or achievement.

W. S.

CHAPTER ONE

PROLOGUE

1938

AT the invitation of Miss Margery Wace, who was helping to develop the 'Empire Service' of the B.B.C. under the direction of Sir Cecil Graves, I undertook early in 1938 to broadcast regularly on 'World Affairs.' Subject to the general editorship of Miss Wace and her colleagues, and to their technical advice, it was agreed that I should be free to say whatever I thought right. The talks were to be given at intervals shorter or longer as occasion might suggest. They were either to deal with specific questions or to review the world situation if events of wider bearing should occur. At the beginning of 1938 the outlook held a prospect of many such events.

I was glad to return to the microphone. In former years at Savoy Hill (before Broadcasting House became the B.B.C.'s headquarters) I had gained some experience of speaking more or less acceptably to an unseen audience. I had even been allowed to improvise some talks, without script or strict time-limit, as when I described 'How the House received the Budget' within a few minutes of the Budget speeches of successive Chancellors of the Exchequer. But in October 1933 I had been guilty of protesting, publicly and privately, against what struck me as a panic-stricken B.B.C. broadcast on Hitler's withdrawal from the League of Nations. My indiscretion earned me a place on the black list of the B.B.C., whose first Director-General appears to have been vexed by my protest against this early 'appeasement' of Nazi Germany.

So I warned Miss Wace that her effort to recruit an unrepentant offender might be overbold. She chose to face the risk, dryly observing that as the talks would go out on short wave they might not be heard, or upset people, in this country.

In return she warned me that the 'Empire Service' was not designed for a comparatively sophisticated home audience, that I must not take for granted on the part of listeners any antecedent knowledge of the subjects I might discuss, and that I should do well to imagine my 'standard listener' to be the head man of an African village who might know just enough English to understand me and to be able to tell his fellow villagers in their own tongues what I had been talking about. Though I had little hope of reaching or maintaining this level of sublime simplicity, I promised to do my best.

The talks began on February 2, 1938, with a review of Anglo-Irish relations in the light of a visit Mr. De Valera had made to London. Next week Nazi Germany claimed attention because Hitler had assumed supreme command of the German Army after dismissing both its Commander-in-Chief, General von Fritsch, and the Minister of War, General von Blomberg. This second talk described the background of Hitler's behaviour, and foreshadowed a Nazi move against Austria in the near future.

A fortnight later, on February 23, 1938, I commented upon Hitler's harangue to his Reichstag in Berlin on Sunday, February 20, and upon the simultaneous resignations of the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Anthony Eden, and of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, Lord Cranborne, as a result of differences between them and the Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, about the degree of confidence to be placed in the governments of countries under dictatorial control. I quoted a message from Berlin to a leading London newspaper that 'The man in the street here [in Berlin] is convinced that Mr. Eden resigned because of the attacks [upon him] made by Herr Hitler on Sunday. In consequence, a speech [to the Reichstag] which had rather misfired yesterday has become this morning a resounding success for Herr Hitler.' And, after noting Mr. Eden's declaration in the House of Commons on February 21 that no progress could be made in European appeasement if we allowed the impression

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to gain currency abroad that we yield to constant pressure, I recorded Mr. Neville Chamberlain's declaration that he had never been more convinced of the rightness of any course than he was now convinced of the rightness of his decision. He and the Cabinet, Mr. Chamberlain added, were seeking a general appeasement throughout Europe which would ensure peace. In conclusion I said:

So here we have an issue which has stirred British feeling more deeply than any question of foreign policy since the political crisis over the Hoare-Laval proposals which drove Sir Samuel Hoare from the Foreign Office in December 1935. It is not my business to predict what the consequences of Mr. Eden's resignation may be. Time will show whether his view or that of the Prime Minister was the wiser. What can be said, without partiality or offence, is that Mr. Eden's reputation as a public man has never stood higher than it stands today.

HITLER SEIZES AUSTRIA

In those pre-war days no official censorship circumscribed a broadcaster's freedom of speech. So I find in my talk on March 16, 1938, upon the invasion and annexation of Austria by Hitler on March 11 a plain-spoken account of the issues involved. Standing before the old Imperial palace in Vienna, Hitler had said: 'In this hour I can make before the German people the greatest report of my life on a task accomplished. As Leader and Chancellor of the German *Nation* and of the German Reich, I report before German history that my homeland has now entered the German Reich. This statement, I pointed out, was especially important because, in German, the word 'Nation' means 'all Germans everywhere,' whereas the word 'Reich' means only the Germans living within the frontiers of Germany which now include Austria; and I laid stress on the fact that the Pope, speaking on the same day and at the same hour to the new Ambassador of Belgium to the Holy See, had expressed his confidence that Belgium would continue to withstand 'the power which now seeks to penetrate everywhere, threatening everyone.'

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The oldest and most experienced members of Parliament, I added, 'agree that never since Monday, August 3, 1914, has the atmosphere of the House of Commons been so tense as it was on the afternoon of Monday, March 14, 1938. Members of Parliament of all parties agree also that the feeling of the House was most fully expressed by Mr. Winston Churchill' who said:

The gravity of the event of March 11 cannot be exaggerated. Europe is confronted with a programme of aggression, nicely calculated and timed, unfolding stage by stage; and there is only one choice open not only to us but to other countries which are unfortunately concerned—either to submit, like Austria has submitted, or to take effective measures while time remains to ward off the danger; and, if it cannot be warded off, to cope with it.

My conclusion was:

Our people feel that the freedom of the free nations of Europe, including our own, is at stake, and that at any moment we may have to defend it. More than this I do not care now to say. This is no time for recrimination or for careless or violent speech. It is a time for calm judgment and firm resolve, for the issues which confront us are too grave to warrant any ill-considered word. . . . Precisely because the way which Hitler has chosen to tread does threaten the peace of Europe the present hour is the most serious moment in European history since July 1914.

THE THREAT TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA

A week later, on March 24, 1938, I described a scene of 'dramatic intensity' in the House of Commons, and said: 'It was as though the principal actors were conscious that they were playing a part in a world drama which all were eager to prevent from becoming a world tragedy.' The Prime Minister had appealed the day before to the leaders of all parties to help him speed up the British re-armament programme. On the morrow he was at pains not to accredit the idea that Germany, after seizing Austria, might sooner or later use force against Czechoslovakia. Field-Marshal Goering had assured the Czechoslovak Government that Germany had no

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designs against Czechoslovak independence; and Lord Halifax, who had succeeded Mr. Anthony Eden at the Foreign Office, informed the House of Lords that he had asked the German Government to repeat this assurance to the British Ambassador in Berlin. It was repeated, and Lord Halifax told Germany that Great Britain had 'taken note' of it. I went on:

Indeed, since Austria was seized by Nazi Germany, and Czechoslovakia has appeared to be threatened, controversy has run high in Great Britain upon the question whether we should or could stand by Czechoslovakia, directly or indirectly, if she were to be attacked. It was upon this point that interest in the Prime Minister's speech was most intense. So far as I am able to judge from Mr. Chamberlain's statement, and from the manifestations of feeling which accompanied and followed it, this interest was not altogether satisfied. Perhaps it could not be. The Prime Minister said that he was not defining a policy so much as an attitude. He could not imagine any events in Europe which would change the fundamental basis of British policy—the maintenance and preservation of peace and the establishment of confidence that peace would in fact be maintained. This does not mean that nothing would make us fight, he continued. We are bound by certain treaty obligations which would entail for us the necessity of fighting if occasion arose; 'and I hope no one doubts that we should be prepared in such an event to fulfil those obligations.' We might also fight for our liberty, the right to live our life according to the standards which our national traditions and our national character have prescribed for us. Still our object must always be to preserve those things which it is worth while to preserve without recourse to war.

Coming then to the question of Czechoslovakia the Prime Minister said that if a solution could be found to the question arising out of the relations between Czechoslovakia and the German minority in that country it would go far to re-establish a sense of stability. He did not think Great Britain could give any prior guarantee to Czechoslovakia or accept in advance the same degree of responsibility for her as was felt in regard to France and Belgium. Nor could he answer in the affirmative whether we should give an assurance to France that in the event of her being called upon, by German aggres-

sion in Czechoslovakia, to fulfil her obligations under the Franco-Czechoslovak alliance we should immediately employ our full military force on behalf of France. The British Government would at all times be ready to render any help in its power in the solution of questions likely to cause difficulty between Germany and Czechoslovakia, and in this connection the British Government did not underrate the definite assurances it had received from the German Government.

Passing then to comment upon Mr. Chamberlain's speech, I described the position of the German minority in Czechoslovakia, and said: 'The danger is that under Nazi influence they may become a sort of Trojan horse within the Czechoslovak State, and be used to make trouble which would serve Hitler as a pretext for intervention.' And I noted that while Mr. Chamberlain had been cheered by his supporters in the House of Commons, he was frequently interrupted by derisive cheers from the Opposition, whose leader, Mr. Attlee, severely condemned Mr. Chamberlain's 'full reliance' upon the assurances of Mussolini and the German Government. I suggested, too, that the House of Commons was more deeply impressed by Mr. Winston Churchill's frontal attack upon the Government's 'attitude' and that 'Mr. Churchill's very downright and detailed account of the international situation, and of the British position, will add to the reputation which that statesman has regained by his recent speeches upon rearmament in the service of the League ideal.' In conclusion I said: 'What may be at stake in the subject of these debates is the preservation, in this country and elsewhere, of those free institutions which the late Lord Balfour defined, in his historic report of November 1926 upon Inter-Imperial Relations, as "the lifeblood" of the British Commonwealth.'

SPAIN AND FRANCE

My next talk on April 6 dealt with the position in Spain in view of the approaching end of the Spanish civil war, and reviewed Spanish history since the beginning of the nineteenth century. It pointed out the inconsistency between Italian and German assurances and Italian and German behaviour, and said that the critics

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of the Prime Minister wished to know whether he has serious grounds for placing—as he had recently said—‘full reliance’ upon Mussolini’s promise to withdraw completely from Spain and her islands when an Anglo-Italian agreement shall have been reached, since it was upon this question of confidence that Mr. Anthony Eden resigned office in February. Even should the Italian withdrawal be complete, there might remain the question of German forces in Spain. While Anglo-Italian conversations had been going on, German forces were reported to have been sent to Spain through Italy; and the bare possibility that there might be truth in these reports was causing uneasiness in France. Whether or not what looked like an ugly situation might prove less ugly on a closer view I was not prepared to say.

A month went by before I spoke again on May 4, 1938. In the meantime I had spent a fortnight in France, and the subject of my talk was the state of Franco-British relations. I reviewed those relations since the end of the war of 1914–18, criticized the error of British policy in not standing by France when the United States went back on the Anglo-American guarantee of French security in 1920, and mentioned that the French Prime Minister had made it quite clear that he thought it a matter of international honour and probity for France to stand by Czechoslovakia if Germany should attack that country or if its German citizens should try to break it up. I thought that recent Franco-British conversations might have cleared away misunderstanding, and said: ‘The French understand that their own safety and the peace of Europe depend upon firm and active agreement between France and Great Britain, and they believe that the foundations of such an agreement have now been laid. For this sign of stability in a woefully unstable world they are grateful. If they are right, I think we British have reason to be grateful too.’

BRITAIN STANDS FIRM

Three weeks later, on May 25, Europe had just passed through the severest crisis since 1918. Hitler had concentrated a large number of troops on the Czechoslovak border, apparently in readiness for attack. The Czechoslovak Government had mobi-

lized some classes of reservists to meet the danger; and British policy had been—almost unexpectedly—firm. In my talk I sketched the history of the Kingdom of Bohemia since the suppression of Czech freedom by the Austrian Hapsburgs between 1620 and 1648—when a prosperous and cultivated people of three million souls had been reduced to 800,000 serfs—and showed how, in the war of 1914–18, President Masaryk had achieved Czechoslovak liberation in the name of John Hus, the Bohemian martyr. I described the position of the German minority, the ‘Sudeten Germans’ as they were beginning to be called, and suggested that their Nazi leader, Herr Henlein, was using them with Hitler’s backing to disrupt the Czechoslovak Republic. The bedrock of the crisis, I said, was that the Czechoslovaks were determined to defend themselves. I added:

When it became clear last week that Hitler was moving troops towards the Czechoslovak border, Great Britain asked the German Government what these movements meant. The Germans said that they were only ‘routine movements’; but the British Government was not quite convinced. It instructed its ambassador in Berlin to ask again, to remind Herr Hitler of what the British Prime Minister had said in the House of Commons on March 24—that if war began anywhere in Europe there could be no telling who would be drawn into it—and to remind him also of France’s repeated declarations that she would help Czechoslovakia in case of attack. This British language seems to have given the German Government some reason to sit back and think. Meanwhile Czechoslovakia called up some 80,000 reservists and brought her army in the field up to 400,000 men. The Sudeten Germans were much impressed. Their agitation died down. . . . These are the bare bones of the crisis. Nobody can yet say for certain how it will turn. But a very important foreign diplomatist said to me yesterday: ‘Great Britain has behaved in this crisis as the free peoples of Europe expected Great Britain to behave.’

By June 22, 1938, when I gave my next talk, the general outlook appeared less reassuring. I began by saying:

The shape of world affairs at this moment is rather like that of an iceberg. An iceberg may float along in a sea, smooth or

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rough, and show a glistening or threatening tower of ice above water, with a point here or there that catches the light and attracts attention. But the mass of the ice is below water, and this mass is far more dangerous to navigators than are the visible points. So, today, the submerged portions of the international situation are more dangerous to the peace of the world than are its visible features. Governments, diplomats and statesmen who are anxious to avoid collisions often pay less heed to what the public may see than to what they themselves know of events and tendencies that do not catch the public eye because little is said about them. So we, uninstructed members of the public, can only make a catalogue of the dangers we do see, and wonder what lies below and in which direction currents are flowing.

My catalogue included the smouldering trouble between Germany and Czechoslovakia; the British agreement with Italy upon the withdrawal of Italian troops from Spain while General Franco's forces, backed by Italy and Germany, were bombing British vessels in Spanish harbours; the Japanese bombings of Canton as incidents in the Japanese attempt to conquer China; the persecution of the Jews in Austria and Germany by the German Nazis; and—as a more favourable factor—progress towards an Anglo-American trade agreement thanks to the growth of a feeling in the United States that the British Government would not be less firm in Europe than it had been in the Czechoslovak-German crisis on May 21. I demurred to many British criticisms of Mr. Chamberlain's policy and observed that both Mr. Anthony Eden and Mr. Winston Churchill had called for greater national unity in support of a strong national government. 'There is no doubt at all,' I said, 'that the Government can get all the backing it may need for the firm handling of any emergency that may arise.' And I pointed out that the enthusiastic French preparations for the visit about to be paid by King George and Queen Elizabeth to Paris were largely due to the firmness of British policy on May 21. 'No man,' I concluded, 'can foretell what will happen, or guess what is most likely to happen. Some fear lest the sombre overclouding of the outlook be but a prelude to black night. Others may hope, with a wish that is perhaps father to the thought, that things have reached the darkest hour and that a glimmer of light cannot be far off.'

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AN IMPRESSIVE SPECTACLE

At the beginning of July 1938 I flew to Prague with a party of British writers and Members of Parliament to witness the great gymnastic festival of the Czechoslovak 'Sokol' Brotherhood. So, in my talk on July 13, I gave some account of the Sokol movement and of its importance in building up the spirit of the Czechoslovak nation. 'To pass in one day from the somewhat nervous atmosphere of London into the atmosphere of Prague, as I did ten days ago, was,' I said, 'like beginning a rest cure. One looked in vain either among the people of Prague or among the 500,000 men and women Sokols who thronged the city, for any trace of fright—though they had just been through the severest crisis in the history of their Republic.' In view of the danger of German attack, the Czechoslovak General Staff had wished the Government to mobilize the whole army. The Government refused, saying that a general mobilization would disturb Europe, and that only enough reservists should be called up to make sure that a sudden German attack could not succeed. So only one class of the reserve was called up—90,000 men, together with the 'specialists' (machine-gunners, airmen, anti-aircraft gunners, tank drivers, and so on) from all the other classes. These specialists numbered about 84,000 men. On the evening of Friday, May 20, all these men were ordered to join their posts, the 90,000 men of the one class being given twelve hours, and the specialists twenty-four hours to do so. Most of these 174,000 men were in bed when the orders were delivered at 10 o'clock on the night of Friday, May 20. By 3 a.m. on the morning of Saturday, May 21, 70 per cent. of the 90,000 were at their posts, and the rest joined them before 10 a.m. The 84,000 specialists turned up in twelve hours or less, instead of in twenty-four. Out of the whole 174,000 only 18 failed to report themselves—8 Germans, 3 Czechs, 4 Magyars and 3 Slovaks; and in some of these 18 cases the mobilization orders could not be delivered in time. By dawn on May 21 the German command across the frontier knew that a sudden attack would have no chance of success. On Monday, May 23, some of the German troops were withdrawn. The crisis was over—thanks, in part, to the promptitude and efficiency of

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the Czechoslovak army. But meanwhile, on Saturday, May 21, the British Ambassador in Berlin, under instructions from London, had called three times on the German Foreign Secretary. On Sunday, May 22, the story spread throughout Germany that Great Britain had prevented war.

At the end of this talk, I said there was reason to believe that Hitler himself did not now favour an immediate, sudden attack upon Czechoslovakia; and I added:

At the Sokol festival in Prague last week, I sat near the foreign diplomatists and soldiers, including the Germans, and watched their faces. They were visibly impressed. What soldier could fail to be struck by the sight of 28,000 stalwart Sokol men marching on to the great Masaryk stadium of forty-five acres, and taking their places for musical drill and exercises, in exactly fifteen minutes? The exercises over, they all marched off again—eight mighty columns sixty abreast—in exactly twelve minutes. I doubt whether any military staff in the world could get the equivalent of an army corps on to and off a space of forty-five acres, without a trace of hurry, in twenty-seven minutes. And the women, of whom 16,200 did their musical drill before the men came on, were just as smart and efficient as the men.

So here was the flower of a nation, physically and morally fit, in the service of three great ideas—freedom, independence and democratic brotherhood. During the whole week in Prague neither I nor any observer heard one word of provocation or saw one defiant gesture. It was an uplifting experience. What the future may bring no man can say. The crisis may be over or it may recur, though I do not think it likely to recur in the same form as it took on May 20 and 21. The Czechoslovaks can put 900,000 well-armed men into the field at a moment's notice; and they are not afraid.

'THE ONLY PROGRAMME'

In the latter part of July and the first three weeks of August 1938 I took a holiday in the country, little dreaming that it was to be my last holiday before May 1945 when the end of the war in Europe would allow me a brief respite from broadcasting. So there was an interval of six weeks between my talk on July 13 and

my next on August 31. The outlook had not improved during the interval. I hung my reflections upon the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Paris, or Briand-Kellogg Pact of August 27, 1928, for the renunciation of war. By it fifteen countries, including Germany, pledged themselves to renounce war as an instrument of national policy and never to seek a settlement of disputes except by peaceful means. I told the story of this pact in some detail, including the modest part which chance had enabled me to play in preparing the ground for it while I was in the United States in October and November 1927. Why, I asked, was this Treaty, as solemnly concluded and ratified as any international undertaking ever had been, considered to be of little or no account in the European crisis? Why was it regarded as a dead letter? My explanation was that none of the nations who signed the Treaty had then understood that if the renunciation of war was to mean anything it must also mean the renunciation of neutrality towards any violator of the Treaty. I could not blame them because it had taken me nearly two years to grasp this implication of the Briand-Kellogg Pact. But I had been much interested, when I had again visited the United States in October 1937, to see that President Roosevelt understood it. His speech at Chicago on October 5, 1937, was a clear warning that neutrality and peace cannot go together. (I did not say in my broadcast that President Roosevelt himself had told me on October 12, 1937, that this was precisely the meaning of his Chicago speech.) I drew attention to the warnings given publicly by the President and his Secretary of State, Mr. Cordell Hull, that if war should come the United States could not be unaffected by it, and that if the drift towards international anarchy should continue the United States would increasingly tend to give active support to 'the only programme which can turn the tide of lawlessness, and place the world firmly upon the one and only roadway that can lead to enduring peace and security.'

This talk ended with the words:

The 'only programme' is obviously some form of concerted international resistance to aggressive war-makers, some kind of deterrent police action. Now deterrent action is incompatible with neutrality. So it would seem that the implications of the Kellogg Pact are beginning to be grasped by responsible

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statesmen. If they had been grasped earlier the state of the world today might be different. I think it will begin to improve on the day when Great Britain and the United States give the right answer to a question which I put publicly in April 1930 to President Hoover in Washington, a question which he then confessed he could not answer. It was: 'When nations renounce war, what—apart from self-defence—is the lawful function of their armaments?' The right answer must be: 'It is an international police function against the crime of aggressive war.' When that answer is given the world will begin to be safe.

SUDETEN GERMANS

By mid-September 1938 German insistence that the demands of the Sudeten Germans of Czechoslovakia must be satisfied without delay had again brought on an acute crisis in Europe. The British Government had sent Lord Runciman to mediate between the Sudeten Germans and the Czechoslovak Government. So, on September 14, I reviewed once more the whole problem of the German minority in Czechoslovakia, and said that if Hitler with his Nazis had not gained control of Germany at the beginning of 1933, with their programme of uniting all Germans in Europe in a great Reich or Empire of one hundred millions, the Sudeten Germans might gradually have come to see the wisdom of working harmoniously with the Czechoslovak State, for with it all their real interests were bound up. A minority of the Bohemian Germans did see this and worked loyally with the Czechoslovak Government. But Nazis looked upon them as traitors. I went on:

During the past year, and especially in the last six months, the present crisis has been coming to a head. The claims and grievances of the Sudeten Germans have been loudly and widely proclaimed. Herr Henlein, the Sudeten German leader, has come repeatedly to London to urge them upon British public men. Last May he surprised his British sympathizers by defining in a speech at Carlsbad his demands in the form of eight points. Most of these points were vague and open to discussion; but the eighth—which demanded freedom for the Sudeten Germans to profess the German Nazi

political philosophy—seemed incompatible with the cohesion of Czechoslovakia. Yet on the advice of Lord Runciman the Czechoslovak Government has accepted all except the eighth point. Now, after a speech by Herr Hitler at Nuremberg, the Sudeten Germans have repudiated the eight points and have broken off negotiations. . . . The truth, as I see it, is that this Sudeten German problem is merely one aspect of a very big and far more important matter. This matter is the programme of uniting all Germans under his leadership which Herr Hitler has repeatedly announced. Most if not all the States of Central Europe where German minorities live are affected by it. They feel that its realization would mean German mastery over the whole of Central and South-Eastern Europe, and they look upon the Sudeten German problem as a test case. How the test case will be decided nobody can foresee. But upon its decision hangs much more than the allegiance of 3,500,000 Germans to one state rather than to another. The big question behind it may be nothing less than the freedom of Europe.

By this time the plot was thickening. I opened my talk on September 21 by saying I had a serious tale to tell, and that the events of the past few days had convinced many more people that the freedom of Europe was at stake. Hitler had proclaimed the necessity of removing the Czechoslovak 'tumour which is poisoning the whole human organism.' In a letter to the Prime Minister, the leader of the Labour Party, Mr. Attlee, had asked that Parliament be summoned without delay to consider 'proposals to dismember a sovereign State at the dictation of the ruler of Germany.' Mr. Neville Chamberlain refused this request since he was engaged 'in difficult and delicate negotiations with the object of finding a peaceful solution of a problem which, if not handled with the utmost care, might have the most serious consequences for this country.' He added that a special meeting of Parliament would be summoned as soon as matters had gone far enough to enable him to make a full statement.

'APPEASEMENT'

The position was that after offering to fly to Germany to see

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Hitler Mr. Chamberlain had flown to Berchtesgaden, as I said, 'amid the hopes, and with the astonished approval, of the greater part of the civilized world.' It had been expected that his negotiations with Hitler would last two or three days. Surprise was felt when he flew back to London next day after a conversation of two or three hours with Hitler through a German interpreter. Mr. Chamberlain said that his talk with Hitler had been frank and friendly; and that he felt satisfied that each of them now fully understood what was in the mind of the other.

Two days later the French Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary flew from Paris to London where, after many hours of negotiation, they agreed upon recommendations which Great Britain and France should jointly make to the Czechoslovak Government. Nothing was then known about the character of these recommendations; but Mr. Chamberlain announced that 'perhaps in a few days' he would have another talk with Hitler who, this time, would come half-way to meet him. So it was arranged that this second talk should take place at Godesberg on the Rhine, a few miles south of Cologne.

The Franco-British recommendations were communicated to the Czechoslovak Government without delay. In reply Czechoslovakia asked for explanations upon certain doubtful points in them, and expressed readiness to submit the whole Sudeten German question to the Court of International Justice at The Hague in accordance with the Czechoslovak-German treaty of arbitration, a treaty of which the Nazi Government had recognized the validity. This offer was brushed aside, and another Franco-British communication was urgently made to Prague. It advised Czechoslovakia to accept the Franco-British recommendations immediately and unconditionally. On receiving it the Czechoslovak Cabinet sat through the night until 6 a.m. next morning. A telegram from Prague then stated that the Franco-British recommendations had been accepted. No official account of their nature had been issued; but on the strength of many unauthorized versions of them which had been published all over the world I summarized them as follows:

- (1) All the regions in Czechoslovakia where more than one-half of the population was recorded as German in the last

Czechoslovak census shall be ceded to Germany without a plebiscite or other form of popular consultation.

(2) An International Commission will fix the new Czechoslovak-German boundaries.

(3) Racial minorities in all other Czechoslovak regions, including those regions in which German minorities will remain, shall be given local self-government or autonomy.

(4) Under these arrangements and within the new territorial limits, the independence and neutrality of Czechoslovakia shall be guaranteed by a number of Powers including Great Britain and France.

(5) As a neutral State Czechoslovakia shall cancel all her treaties of alliance with France, Russia, Roumania and Yugoslavia.

(6) A transfer of populations may be arranged so that Germans within the new boundaries of Czechoslovakia may settle in Germany if they wish, and inhabitants of the regions ceded to Germany may, if they wish, settle within the new boundaries of Czechoslovakia.

Though it was impossible to tell at that moment how near to the truth this version of the Franco-British recommendations might be (it turned out to be very near the truth) I commented upon it in these words:

If the reports of these recommendations are near the truth, if the Czechoslovak Government has accepted them, and if it is able to persuade or to compel the Czechoslovak people and army to acquiesce in them, they would mean for Czechoslovakia the loss of her strongest fortified lines along the mountain ranges to the west and the north-west, and also the extinction of that part of her sovereignty which consists in a nation's right to enter into alliances for the defence of its national territory. The loss of much mineral wealth in coal and iron and fertile soil would also be involved; and under the complicated system of local self-government which is proposed it is uncertain how much authority a central Czechoslovak Government would retain.

Nor is this all. Hungary and Poland, with the support of Germany, are pressing their demands for the same treatment of the Magyar and Polish minorities in Czechoslovakia as that which the Sudeten Germans would receive. This might mean

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the cession of further important regions to Poland and Hungary, so that the rump Czechoslovak State would be a sorely diminished country. There is, indeed, a good deal of mystery about this whole business. It would seem that the British and French Governments hope to avoid the outbreak of a general war by forestalling a German invasion of Czechoslovakia. But it was precisely against the danger of foreign invasion that the Czechoslovak alliances with France and with Russia were concluded. When Mr. Neville Chamberlain issued his famous warning to Germany in the House of Commons on March 24, when that warning was repeated to the German Government on May 21, and when it was reiterated publicly by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Simon, at Lanark last month, it was generally supposed that if Germany should attack Czechoslovakia the Franco-Czechoslovak alliance and the Russo-Czechoslovak alliance would come into play, and that Great Britain could not be indifferent if the security or the integrity of France were consequently to be threatened. So people are asking today whether the Franco-Czechoslovak alliance and the Russo-Czechoslovak alliance have broken down; and, if so, why?

Bitter language is now being used by many newspapers and public men in many parts of Europe and of the world. They speak of an 'unprecedented capitulation' of French and British diplomacy under threat from Nazi Germany. It may be too early to discuss how far, if at all, such language is warranted. But one or two reflections occur to me, and I give them for what they may be worth.

Czechoslovakia has, or had, the best-equipped and most efficient army in Central Europe outside Germany. In quality it might even bear comparison with the present German army, if only because there has been universal military service in Czechoslovakia since 1920, and her proportion of trained reservists is therefore high, whereas Germany has only had universal military service for two or three years. At full strength the Czechoslovak army would number well over a million men. Behind its strong fortifications it would have been a very formidable proposition for Germany to tackle. But if it can be weakened, or the country can be disintegrated from within, a line for German military and territorial expansion in South-Eastern Europe towards the Black Sea would be opened; and by neutralizing what might remain of

Czechoslovakia in future Herr Hitler would have scored his greatest triumph.

Another reflection is that every other European State with a mixed population of Germans and non-Germans would feel that a precedent dangerous to its own integrity had been created, and that Great Britain and France could do nothing to protect them. Among these States are France herself (as regards Alsace and Lorraine); Switzerland (where the majority of the population is German); Yugoslavia, Roumania, Poland and Denmark. Belgium and Holland might not feel safe because Germany considers the Flemings of Belgium and all Dutchmen to be Low Germans and therefore as belonging to the German Folk community.

So the anxious question is being asked whether, if one composite State can be broken up with French and British acquiescence under pressure of German Nazi agitation and threats of military force, some if not all these other States would not be broken up and forced to surrender. If not, where will the line be drawn?

I should be less than truthful were I not to say that British feeling is deeply perturbed and profoundly disquieted. I, for my part, have never known it to be more deeply stirred. And so we await what the next few hours and days may bring.

A GRIM STORY

My next talk was on Thursday, September 29. It began with the words: 'My story last week was serious. Today it is grim. Even if the outbreak of war be postponed or averted, it may still be grim.'

Before trying to tell the story, as dispassionately as possible, I recorded the announcement made in the House of Commons, less than an hour before I spoke, that Mr. Neville Chamberlain had appealed to Hitler to delay German military action against Czechoslovakia and had offered to go once more to Germany. Hitler had agreed to meet him at Munich on Friday, September 30, together with Mussolini and the French Prime Minister, Daladier. This announcement followed a long speech by the Prime Minister to the House of Commons. It contained many new particulars of the crisis; and when Mr. Chamberlain said he would go a third

time to meet Hitler, the House and the galleries rose and cheered loudly.

'This,' I said, 'has been the climax to a day of tension. Some twelve hours ago President Roosevelt made a direct appeal to Herr Hitler and proposed an international conference to deal with the issues involved in the crisis. We do not know what answer Herr Hitler has given. We know only that Germany first denied yesterday's report that she would order general mobilization this afternoon, and that her mobilization has now been postponed for twenty-four hours pending the meeting in Munich.

'Meanwhile Great Britain has been preparing for the worst. The British Navy is in process of precautionary mobilization, and aircraft exercises are now going on over London and the eastern and southern coasts. Things seem to be trembling on the brink of war.'

Then I recounted the sequence of events in so far as they were publicly known. The Prime Minister had gone to Godesberg in order to deliver the assent of the Czechoslovak Government to the Franco-British recommendations which Czechoslovakia had accepted under pressure. The severity of that pressure could be judged from published statements that unless the recommendations were accepted Great Britain would not support France in helping Czechoslovakia, France would not fulfil the terms of her defensive alliance with Czechoslovakia, and that the Czechoslovaks would be held responsible for any outbreak of war. Yet, as Mr. Chamberlain told the House of Commons, when he presented the Czechoslovak acceptance to Hitler at Godesberg it was brushed aside, and Mr. Chamberlain was given a German map, and a memorandum with a time-limit—that is to say, an ultimatum—which went far beyond the Franco-British recommendations; and, while Mr. Chamberlain had been getting ready to go to Godesberg, the Nazi press and radio had been covering Czechoslovakia with abuse and demanding nothing less than her obliteration. Simultaneously, Poland and Hungary began to demand for the Polish and Magyar citizens of Czechoslovakia the same treatment as the Sudeten Germans would receive. At Godesberg Mr. Chamberlain had been treated without much courtesy. He had been obliged to cross the Rhine by special ferry to Hitler's

hotel on the other bank, and had even been reduced to communicating with Hitler by letter. When they had met at 10.30 p.m. on the night of September 23, Hitler gave Mr. Chamberlain notice that the new German terms must be accepted by Saturday, October 1. Mr. Chamberlain sent these terms to Prague without pressure or recommendation. His comment in the House of Commons on this talk with Hitler was: 'You cannot call this complete breakdown. It is up to the Czechs now.'

Before the new German terms were sent to Prague, the British and French Ministers there informed the Czechoslovak Government that Great Britain and France could no longer take the responsibility of advising them not to mobilize their army. The Czechoslovak army was mobilized immediately.

On Sunday, September 25, the French Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary had come again to London, but before they came the German terms were published in Berlin. On pain of immediate invasion the Czechoslovaks were summoned to deliver up to Germany by October 1 all the territories marked on a map attached to the terms, the areas marked as German to be occupied by German troops without considering whether a plebiscite, to be held at latest on November 25, might or might not prove some of the areas to be inhabited by Czech majorities. From all areas marked as German the Czechoslovak troops, police, gendarmes, customs officials and frontier guards were to be withdrawn. Everything was to be handed over intact, including fortifications, factories, wireless stations, aerodromes, railway rolling stock, gas works, power stations, foodstuffs, goods, cattle and raw materials. All Sudeten Germans in the Czechoslovak army or police were to be discharged, and all political prisoners of German race to be set free at once. When all these conditions had been complied with, a plebiscite could be carried out in some doubtful areas under an International Commission. The German map showed that these conditions would deprive Czechoslovakia of all her artillery and equipment, that the Czech portion of the principal Czechoslovak province, Bohemia, would be almost cut off from its sister province, Moravia, and that Slovakia would also be endangered. So it was not surprising that in a broadcast address to the British people Mr. Chamberlain should have called Hitler's 'attitude'

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unreasonable or that the Czechoslovak Government should have declared Hitler's demands absolutely and unconditionally unacceptable. Nevertheless Poland and Hungary pressed their demands for further slices of Czechoslovak territory. This behaviour, on the part of Poland in particular, made a sinister impression in Great Britain; and little sympathy was felt for Poland when Soviet Russia promptly told her that if a Polish attack were made on Czechoslovakia, Russia would consider the Russo-Polish non-aggression pact to be null and void.

After this summary of the situation my talk concluded with the following passage:

This (Russian) warning, together with the growing firmness of France and the steadiness of public feeling in Great Britain, created what I might almost call a sense of sombre relief. Should Germany persist in her demands (and insist upon enforcing them by methods incompatible with the freedom and peace of any country in Europe) it was felt that a resolute stand would now be made against her.

It was in this mood that our people awaited Herr Hitler's speech to the German nation last Monday evening. Those who heard and could understand that speech in the original were estranged as much by its overweening tone as by its violent and unwarranted personal abuse of Dr. Beneš, the peace-loving President of the Czechoslovak Republic, as 'the father of the lies that brought Czechoslovakia into being.' Even to me, who have followed Herr Hitler's career with some attention, and have listened daily to the German wireless propaganda, it came as a shock that the Leader and Chancellor of the German people should have repeated and sponsored all the incendiary misstatements with which the German people have been plied.

And when, in the small hours of Wednesday morning, we learned that in view of this speech Mr. Chamberlain had made yet another appeal to Herr Hitler, and had gone bail for the full execution of the original Franco-British plan if only Herr Hitler would revert to it and give up the threat of violence, our people were amazed at the Prime Minister's patience and goodwill. They felt that in the depth and intensity of his desire for peace he had put aside any resentment he might have been entitled to feel at Herr Hitler's treatment of

him, so as to leave undone nothing that could possibly serve to pave the way to the avoidance of war.

It was with the same feeling that we listened to his broadcast statement on Tuesday evening, and have received his announcement this afternoon. Both yesterday and today Mr. Chamberlain admitted that the German memorandum had taken him completely by surprise. How things will now develop there are no means of judging. Parliament has adjourned until Monday. The British nation yearns for peace. But I can say from personal knowledge of what has gone on in London and in country districts during the past few days that not even during the Great War was a finer spirit abroad in the land. Deep down in the minds of our people lies the conviction that it is not so much a question of Czechoslovakia—warm though sympathy and admiration for that gallant country are—as of a determined stand for the principles of responsible personal freedom and of constitutional democratic government upon which our institutions and the whole British Commonwealth of Nations are founded. In this cause, our people feel, we shall fight, if we have to fight, with the certainty of ultimate triumph over the foes of all that we hold dear.

'MUNICH'—AND AFTER

After the Munich 'agreement' on September 30, 1938, five weeks passed before it was thought expedient that my talks on world affairs should be resumed. I shared this feeling. Any faithful interpretation of the British state of mind must have recorded the outbursts of indignation which followed the sacrifice of Czechoslovakia to Hitler and, simultaneously, the sense of relief that war had been avoided. Thanksgiving services were held throughout the country on Sunday, October 2, despite apprehension lest a declaration which Hitler and Neville Chamberlain had signed in Munich on October 1 prove to be as untrustworthy as Hitler's former engagements had invariably been. So silence seemed the better part of speech.

On his return to England from Munich Mr. Chamberlain declared: 'This is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street "Peace with

Honour." I believe it is peace for our time.' He waved the paper he had signed with Hitler that morning in Munich and proudly said: 'It bears his signature as well as mine.' The paper said: 'We recognize that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for the two countries and for Europe. We regard the agreement signed last night [on Czechoslovakia] and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.' In a broadcast address to the nation Mr. Chamberlain expressed his relief that we should not have been involved in war over a quarrel between two distant foreign peoples 'of whom we know nothing.'

In protest against Mr. Chamberlain's policy the First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Duff-Cooper, had tendered his resignation. In the House of Commons on October 3 he said: 'The Prime Minister may be right. I hope and pray that he is right; but I cannot believe what he believes; I wish I could. Therefore I can be of no assistance to him in his Government; I should only be a hindrance and it is much better that I should go. . . . I have ruined, perhaps, my political career. But that is a little matter. I have retained something which is to me of greater value—I can still walk about the world with my head erect.'

Mr. Attlee, the Leader of the Labour Opposition, criticized the Government severely. 'We have,' he said, 'seen a gallant and civilized democratic people betrayed and handed over to ruthless despotism. The cause of democracy has suffered a terrible defeat. It is a tremendous victory for Herr Hitler.' And on October 6 Mr. Winston Churchill said in the House of Commons debate: 'France and Great Britain have suffered unmitigated defeat. The sole method now open to us will be to acquire supremacy in the air. We have passed an awful milestone in our history, and the terrible words have been pronounced against the Western democracies: "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting."'

On October 5 Dr. Beneš resigned the Presidency of the Czechoslovak Republic. In a dignified statement he told his people: 'Do not expect from me that I shall pronounce one single word of recrimination. These questions will one day be decided by history.' Hitler, for his part, warned England that she must free herself

from arrogance. The tutelage of a foreign governess, he said, is something that Germany cannot and will not tolerate.

No broadcast talk in October could have failed to mention these things. Indeed feeling was still running so high at the beginning of November that I began my talk on November 2 by saying: 'There are moments when it would be easier to be silent about world affairs than to speak of them. This is such a moment. It is not because there is nothing to say but because there is too much to say about too many things, and that the aspect of these things is shifting almost from hour to hour.' I went on to speak of the German occupation of the regions of Czechoslovakia, where officers of the British Legion had undertaken police duties, and of the fund opened by the Lord Mayor of London for the relief of the hundreds of thousands of Czechs who had sought refuge in Prague. The British Government had granted Czechoslovakia a loan of £10 million; and the steadfastness of the Czechoslovak people seemed to warrant hope that they would be able to save substantial independence for the remnant of their country. But I pointed out the misgivings felt throughout Central Europe and the Balkans where Nazi intrigues were becoming especially evident, and also in Poland whom Germany had begun to bully. Germany had suddenly seized some 20,000 Jewish and non-Jewish citizens on German territory and had sent them in cattle trucks to the Polish frontier. The Polish reply was to arrest large numbers of German citizens in Warsaw and other cities, and to propose to transport them forthwith to the German frontier. Many people in England expected conflict between Germany and Poland on this account. Yet the result was not an outburst of German anger but a prompt agreement between the Polish and German Governments to suspend expulsions on both sides of the frontier. At the end of my talk I said that this incident reminded me of a passage in Mr. Neville Chamberlain's speech to the House of Commons on September 28. After referring to Hitler's ultimatum at Godesberg, and describing how it had shocked him, the Prime Minister went on: 'I bitterly reproached the Chancellor [Herr Hitler] for his failure to respond in any way to the efforts which I had made to secure peace. In spite of these plain words, this conversation was carried on in more friendly terms than any that had yet preceded

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it, and Herr Hitler informed me that he appreciated and was grateful for my efforts.' Some people in our own country, I added, think that we might do worse than learn the lesson which Poland has done her best to teach us.

THE ROUMANIAN DILEMMA

My next talk on November 23 consisted mainly of a history of Roumania in connection with the first State visit to London of King Carol II. From London King Carol went to Paris, and thence to see Hitler in Berlin; and, as he had told me during a previous unofficial visit to London in August 1937 of his deep admiration for Hitler, and I had warned him of German designs upon the independence of his country, I thought it well to say in this talk:

Roumania knows, and King Carol II is certainly not unaware, that her fertile corn lands, her oil wells, the timber of her forests, and the use of her great waterways, which include the Lower Danube and give access to the Black Sea, would be of great value to any country that should seek to dominate South-Eastern Europe. It would matter little whether such domination were sought by Germany as a safeguard against a naval blockade, or as a strategic preliminary to an invasion of Russia from the south-west. In any event Roumanian freedom might disappear. From this standpoint it is of interest that King Carol should now be on a visit to Germany where he will see Herr Hitler. Much may depend upon the outcome of their meeting. As Roumania, by herself, might not be able to withstand the formidable economic, political and military pressure which Germany could put upon her, the question arises whether she can reckon upon effective help from any quarter. 'This is a question not easy to answer. . . . Roumania is not the only central or south-eastern country that desires to keep its independence. In varying degrees Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and even Hungary, to say nothing of Poland and Turkey, share this desire. Can they count upon support from Western Europe and, if so, how can such support be given? This may well have been one of the problems which King Carol discussed with British Ministers in London last week and has since discussed with French Ministers in Paris. The Prince-

Regent of Yugoslavia, who is now in London, may also be interested in the problem; and it should not be assumed that Russia is altogether indifferent to it. How it will be solved neither I nor any man can say, for it has been sorely complicated by the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.

PAN-AMERICAN UNION

A further and unexpected effect of the Munich 'agreement' was touched upon in my talk on December 14. A meeting of the Pan-American Conference at Lima, the capital of Peru, showed that the influence of the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia was by no means confined to Europe. As I had reason to know that my talks on world affairs had been followed attentively in the Peruvian capital I commented at length upon this Conference and upon the implications of the Monroe Doctrine in the light of Italian Fascism, German Nazism and, to some extent, Spanish Falangism. Taking as my text a message from Washington to a leading British newspaper, which said that in addition to relations between the United States and the Republics of Central and South America the Lima Conference would also take into account matters of even greater urgency arising out of developments in Europe and the Far East, I traced the genesis of the League of Nations from an idea which the existence of the Pan-American Union had suggested to Colonel House, the adviser of President Wilson, in November 1914. But I pointed out that for many years after the establishment of the League of Nations the South and Central American Republics were among its most eager and active members. They seemed to look upon the League at Geneva as a safeguard against any tendency or ambition on the part of the United States to 'boss' them. In 1936 this distrust had been mitigated by President Roosevelt's proclamation of his 'good neighbour' policy at the Buenos Aires Conference of the Pan-American Union, when he had said that in Pan-American affairs the vote of the United States would count no more and no less than the vote of the little Republic of San Salvador.

Tracing then the history of the Monroe Doctrine, which was announced on December 2, 1823, by President Monroe of the

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United States with the approval of the British statesman, Canning, I interpreted its meaning on the strength of a report that had come from Mexico City. The Monroe Doctrine said: 'Any interference on the part of the Great Powers of Europe for the purpose of oppressing or controlling the destiny of the Spanish-American States which had declared their independence, would be dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States and would be considered as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards them.' The report from Mexico City argued that the Pan-American Conference at Lima had acquired unusual significance as a result of the Munich agreement at the end of September, since a consequence of that agreement—which sanctioned the partition of the Czechoslovak Republic—had been a sudden intensification of German and Italian economic pressure upon Latin America. The report expressed the belief that the Lima Conference might check what it called 'the Fascist drive for domination' which had induced many Latin American countries to think that Nazi and Fascist economic penetration, reinforced by foreign subsidies to reactionary militarist movements, might be a greater danger than any which the Monroe Doctrine could involve. And, after quoting some British press opinions upon the Lima Conference, my talk concluded:

There is only one principle which personal experience during the past quarter of a century inclines me to regard as the true test of the value of whatever may be done at Lima. This principle is that States which wish to stand together for freedom, for independence and against aggression, will be the more likely to succeed in proportion as they form themselves into a union, a real community of peoples, not merely a league of Governments or States. In forming such a union some sacrifice of absolute national sovereignty might be indispensable. The sovereign right to be neutral in case of aggression would have to be given up; and there would have to be co-ordination, if not an actual pooling, of the means of defence, political as well as military. The failure of the League of Nations to act on this principle after the Great War may be the reason why the League has disappointed so many of the hopes which the peace-loving peoples of the world placed in it. If, at Lima or elsewhere, the peoples of the New World

could learn the lesson of this disappointment, I, for one, think they might, indeed, save themselves by their exertions and help to save Europe by their example.

A NOTE OF WARNING—THE UKRAINE

On December 28, my last^{*} talk in the year 1938, I returned to Europe and dealt with the problem of the Ukraine, sketching its history, its bearing upon relations between Soviet Russia and Poland, and pointing out that control of the Ukraine with its thirty-five million people in Russia, and some three or four million in south-eastern Poland, was no longer the concern of Russia and Poland alone, since both Poland and Russia were jointly and severally threatened by the aim of Nazi Germany to secure the rich soil, mineral wealth and great rivers of the region as a granary and a source of raw materials for the Greater Germany which Hitler meant to set up. I mentioned also the religious antagonism between the Roman Catholic and the Russian Orthodox Churches which had long persisted in and on the borders of the Ukraine. Since the end of the sixteenth century the spearhead of the Roman Catholic attack upon Russian Orthodoxy had been the Greek United, or Uniate, Church which combined some of the Greek rites with religious allegiance to Rome; and I said that as a counter-stroke Russian agitators had carried on a campaign of propaganda in favour of the conversion to Orthodoxy of the Ukrainians or Ruthenes in Austria who belonged to the Uniate Church. This ecclesiastical rivalry assumed a political aspect after the Great War of 1914-18 had resulted in the reunification of Poland and in the return to her of several million Ukrainians in the eastern half of the former Austrian province of Galicia. While the Poles had behaved ruthlessly to their own Ukrainians who demanded self-government within the Polish Republic, the Russian Bolsheviks had also suppressed Ukrainian autonomy and had persecuted the wealthier peasants, or Kulaks, of the Russian Ukraine. Finally, since the rise of Nazism in Germany, subsidized German propaganda had sought to prepare for the conquest of the whole Ukraine, including the Polish part of it, by Germany, as a step towards the acquisition of new 'soil' for German 'blood' until,

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according to Hitler, the population of Germany would one day increase to 200 million.

Reports upon the proceedings of the Conference of German Nazi leaders which Hitler had addressed at Munich early in December suggested, I said, that he has in view the conquest of the whole Ukraine at the expense of Poland and Russia alike. Hitler had spoken in favour of 'self-determination' and 'autonomy' for the Ukraine, in much the same way as he favoured propaganda for the autonomy of the Sudeten Germans as a means of breaking up Czechoslovakia. I added that it would certainly not be in accordance either with Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, or with his general policy to create an independent or semi-independent State on the border of Germany. Rather would he seek to expel or otherwise to eliminate the Ukrainians from their territory and to people it with German settlers. For such a policy Hitler could find warrant in one of the famous speeches addressed 'To the German Nation' by the philosopher, Fichte, in 1807. In that speech Fichte declared that a people 'true to Nature,' like the Germans, who might find their own homeland too small, could extend it by the conquest of neighbouring territories, so as to gain more space, and that they would then drive out the former inhabitants or bring them into its homeland as slaves without ever allowing them to share in the life of the German people.

Matters had come to a head on December 10 when the leader of the Ukrainian parliamentary representation at Warsaw brought forward a bill in favour of territorial autonomy as a constitutional right of the Ukrainian people. The bill was drafted with so much legal skill that the Polish press denounced it at once as the work of German lawyers. Simultaneously the Russian secret police arrested a number of officers in the Russian Ukraine, including three generals and twenty colonels, on charges of conspiring against Moscow under the influence of German propaganda. In these circumstances Poland suddenly began to draw nearer to Soviet Russia with whom she had long been on anything but friendly terms. In present circumstances, I said, concerted Russo-Polish resistance to German intrigues might be strong enough to make Germany think twice before launching a direct attack. But, I concluded:

WORDS ON THE AIR

For this very reason it is necessary to remember the existence of the Anti-Comintern Pact or alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan. It seems improbable that Japan would fail to lend Germany some help by disturbing Russia in the Far East if Germany should start a campaign against Russia and Poland in Central and Eastern Europe. Nor is it likely that any of these possible schemes would be seriously undertaken before some of the Italian aims in the Mediterranean and North Africa had been satisfied. All in all, the chief lesson to be drawn from the Ukrainian problem is that no serious conflict in any region of Europe or Asia can be judged by itself alone, and that it forms part of the complicated play of pressure and counter-pressure which makes the present situation in the world the most dangerous within living memory.

It was on this note of warning that my talks ended in the troubled year 1938. The course of events in 1939 was to justify it abundantly.

CHAPTER TWO
TOWARDS WAR

January to August 1939

BY January 25, when I gave my first talk in 1939, the position of Poland as the next object of German attack had come into the foreground. I saw that Herr von Ribbentrop, Hitler's Foreign Minister, had gone to Warsaw to pay, with great ceremony, the first visit ever paid by a German Foreign Secretary to the capital of an independent Polish State. In the eighteenth century, when Poland had last been an independent and united State, there was no Germany to speak of. 'Germany' then consisted of several hundred sovereign states under the shadow of the 'Holy Roman Empire of Germanic Nation,' with an Emperor, or Empress, of Austria at its head. And in 1772 it was Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, who tempted the Empress Catherine of Russia and the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria to carve up and share Poland between them. Not until the imperial systems of Russia and Austria had gone down, together with the German Hohenzollern Empire, in the Great War of 1914-18 could an independent and united Polish State come again into being. The Peace Treaty had given Poland access to the sea through the ancient maritime province of Poland, or Pomorze, to the port of Danzig, which was placed under the jurisdiction of the League of Nations. The northern part of Pomorze formed, as it had formed for centuries before Poland was cut up, a Corridor between East Prussia and the rest of Germany. Against this Corridor German policy and propaganda had been steadily directed. My talk went on:

THE DISINTEGRATION OF EUROPE

The German agitation against the Polish Corridor reached its highest point in the spring of 1933, a few months after Herr Hitler had gained control of Germany. It was the same sort of agitation as that which Hitler and his Propaganda Ministry worked up last year about the Sudeten Germans of Czechoslovakia, though in the case of Poland it did not succeed so completely. It did succeed, however, in bringing about the break-up of post-war Europe. The international crisis that fills our thoughts today is, in my opinion, a direct result of it.

Let me tell the story briefly. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Prime Minister of the British National Government, and his Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, were more than half-persuaded that a European war might break out unless there were a revision of frontiers fixed by the Peace Treaties and, in particular, a return of the Polish Corridor to Germany. They were impressed by the German claim that the Corridor was 'intolerable.'

So in March 1933 Mr. Macdonald and Sir John Simon suddenly flew from Geneva to Rome where Mussolini handed them a document which may or may not have taken them aback but which they undertook to consider carefully. It proposed a Four-Power Pact between Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, France and Great Britain for the maintenance of peace, the revision of European frontiers and (though this may not have been definitely mentioned) the removal of the Polish Corridor. If this plan had been adopted it would, of course, have set up, within or without the League of Nations, an understanding between four Great European Powers, exclusive of Russia, and thus have weakened the alliances between Poland and France on the one hand, and those between France and the Little Entente—Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Roumania—on the other.

I happened to hear Mr. Ramsay Macdonald explain, rather vaguely, this proposal for a Four-Power Pact to a critical House of Commons in 1933. Though he gave the proposal his blessing, he appeared to be worried about it. He said they would have to examine carefully a project which had, in his words, 'as its general purpose, peace, and as its big and almost only detail, the revision of frontiers.'

The original plan for this Four-Power Pact may have come

from Hitler and Mussolini. Unlike Mr. Macdonald and Sir John Simon, whom it puzzled, the Dictator of Poland, Marshal Pilsudski, saw immediately what it meant. He knew it was meant to cut out the League of Nations and to cut up Poland. So he acted energetically. He refused to appoint a new Polish ambassador to Italy in place of the one who had just retired; and he sent a message to Herr Hitler in language which he felt certain Hitler would understand. Roughly, it ran: 'Do you want war with Poland today, tomorrow, in five years or in ten? If so, you can have it as soon as you like.'

Hitler understood. He answered cleverly that he did not want war with Poland either then or in five years; and that he was ready to negotiate a ten years' pact of non-aggression with Poland. Pilsudski may or may not have been prepared for this reply. In any event the negotiations began. They led, on January 25, 1934, to the signing of a non-aggression pact between Germany and Poland for ten years. Today, January 25, 1939, the German Foreign Secretary, Herr von Ribbentrop, has gone to Warsaw to celebrate its anniversary. Germany ceased complaining about the 'intolerable Corridor.'

There were other results of the plan for a Four-Power Pact. Like Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Sir John Simon, the French Foreign Secretary, M. Paul-Boncour, had not rejected the plan outright. He thought there might be 'something in it.' This was enough to enrage the Poles, and to make them feel that they could not count absolutely upon France. The Governments of the Little Entente, with which France had defensive alliances, were also perturbed. They sent the Roumanian Foreign Minister, M. Titulescu, as a special ambassador to London. There he told Mr. Macdonald and Sir John Simon, on April 6, 1933, that frontier revision would sooner or later mean war, and that they, in their idealism for what they thought peace, were in danger of becoming war-makers. Mr. Macdonald deprecated what he called so 'perverse a conception,' but the warning impressed him. Dr. Beneš, the Czechoslovak Foreign Secretary, went to Paris where, likewise in the name of the Little Entente, he told M. Paul-Boncour that France was entitled to sign any treaty she might like, but that with the stroke of the pen by which she would put her signature under the projected Four-Power Pact she would erase her signature to her alliances with the coun-

tries of the Little Entente. On behalf of Poland a similar message was delivered.

M. Paul-Boncour was upset. He asked what the Little Entente and Poland wished him to do. They answered that they wanted a letter from him declaring that nothing in any Four-Power Pact could weaken or invalidate in any way the terms of the French alliances with them; and that the text of this letter should be communicated to Great Britain, Germany and Italy before any Four-Power Pact was signed.

M. Paul-Boncour submitted. He wrote the letter, and communicated it to the British, German and Italian Governments which, in consequence, had to change the proposed terms of the Four-Power Pact so that, when it was signed a little later, it looked like a very harmless affair. All the documents concerned, though not the conversations I have mentioned, were published in a little French Blue Book which was quickly withdrawn from circulation. I happen to possess a copy of it.

All the same, Poland remained uneasy. If France had been disposed to flirt with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, Poland could flirt too. So, while the non-aggression pact between Germany and Poland was being negotiated, three or four secret undertakings are said, on what I think trustworthy authority, to have been come to. In the light of what happened in Central Europe last year, they appear very significant.

One was an undertaking that Poland should remain neutral if Germany should occupy or annex Austria. Another was that Poland should not join the Little Entente; and a third was that Poland should not conclude any agreement with Czechoslovakia. The story of these secret undertakings soon leaked out. It was then seen that the shrewd Italo-German proposal for a Four-Power Pact had begun to disintegrate post-war Europe.

The inner reason for this disintegration was—as Hitler and Mussolini no doubt meant it to be—the growth of a feeling that Poland, and the other independent countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, could no longer count absolutely upon the support of France or Great Britain, within the League of Nations or outside it, if their territorial integrity or their independence should be endangered by Germany. How well-founded this feeling was in the cases of Austria and Czechoslovakia the events of last year have proved. The case

of Poland is slightly different. For one thing, Poland is a much bigger country. For another, her territory lies between Germany on the west and Soviet Russia on the east. To understand what this means it is not enough merely to look at the map. I may be dull-witted; but the real position of Poland only dawned on me one day in the summer of 1926 when I was out on the Polish plain east of Warsaw, and could almost feel the neighbourhood of Russia. When I came west again and entered Germany, through the Corridor, I felt the reality of German pressure. And both on east and west there are many hundred miles of completely unfortified Polish frontier in open country. Now Poland is anxious not to be invaded by either of her big neighbours, or to be cut up again by them. So her Government tries to keep on fairly good terms with both. It has made a non-aggression pact with Moscow as well as with Berlin. And even while Herr von Ribbentrop is trying, in Warsaw, to bring Poland definitely into the German camp, Warsaw and Moscow are discussing a new trade agreement after a recent display of friendship.

Not much sympathy is felt for Poland in Western Europe just now. She behaved too badly when she cut her pound of flesh out of stricken Czechoslovakia last autumn by seizing, within that State, territory which was partly inhabited by Poles. She ought to have remembered that she was once cut up, and that a good third of her population are no more Polish than the Sudeten Germans were Czechoslovak, and are much worse treated. Though Poland counts some thirty-six million inhabitants—Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, Germans and White Russians—Herr Hitler called her contemptuously the other day 'a nation of sixteen millions.' Unless Colonel Beck, her enigmatical Foreign Minister, is very friendly to Herr von Ribbentrop, German propaganda may again tell the world that the Polish 'Corridor' is utterly intolerable, and that Germany demands 'self-determination' for the oppressed Polish Germans and Ukrainians. Whether Russia would oppose the cutting up of Poland, or 'do a deal' with Germany at Polish expense, no one can tell.

All in all, Poland may be in a pretty tight place. Italy is advising her to agree with Germany and to fall in with Italo-German plans so as to get a share of French and British colonies. Those plans are directed not only against Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, but against France through Spain

and Switzerland. What will Poland do? I, for one, do not envy Colonel Beck his job at this particular moment.

The official *communiqué* issued in Warsaw at the end of Herr von Ribbentrop's visit stated that all problems directly interesting Poland and Germany, as well as the general situation, were exhaustively discussed; and that the conversations, conducted in a sincere and frank atmosphere, 'disclosed a harmony of views on all points and problems of the present and future which concern the two States.' The results of the conversations, said the *communiqué*, 'show once again that the Polish-German collaboration of the last five years has not only contributed to the favourable development of Polish-German relations but has become in the new situation an important contribution to the European appeasement now in progress.'

'THE SPIRIT OF ROME'

This *communiqué* did little to convince careful observers of 'the new situation' that 'the European appeasement now in progress' would attain its ostensible object. It appeared in much the same doubtful light as the statement issued in Rome after the visit of Mr. Neville Chamberlain and Lord Halifax to the King of Italy earlier in January, when they had drunk a toast to King Victor Emmanuel as 'Emperor of Ethiopia.' A further element of uncertainty came into the outlook when Pope Pius XI died on February 13, and a conclave of Cardinals was summoned to elect his successor. Therefore in my next talk, on February 22, I gave a brief history of the Vatican, the College of Cardinals and of the meaning of the Papal title of 'Supreme Pontiff' or 'Pontifex Maximus.' Then, drawing upon personal recollections and reflections, I added:

During the years I lived in Rome, and watched the workings of the Roman Curia, that is to say, the body of administrative and judicial institutions by means of which the Pope carries on the general government of the Roman Church, it was borne in upon me that 'the Vatican' cannot be rightly understood except as a continuation of the Roman Empire. It is an imperial ecclesiastical government—with the accent

on 'government.' Well do I remember the noise made in 1894 when a Frenchman of letters, Ferdinand Brunetière, proclaimed 'The Bankruptcy of Science' after a visit to the Vatican. He argued that France needed moral government which the Vatican alone could supply, because it was, above all, 'a government.' And the same idea, from a different standpoint, was put to me eleven years later when the Vatican threw away the patrimony of the Roman Church in France by rejecting the conditions laid down by the French Republic for the separation of the churches from the State. Then a distinguished French Prelate in Rome, the late Mgr. Duchesne, deplored what he thought a piece of folly and added, bitterly: 'Here in Rome they understand one thing, and one thing only—obedience, obedience to Vatican Government.'

In one way, this is the spirit of Papal Rome. It will inspire the sixty-two Cardinals who form what is now called the 'Sacred College,' but resembles the ancient 'College of Pontiffs,' as they gather to elect a new Supreme Pontiff or Pontifex Maximus. But the spirit of Rome herself, the 'Eternal City,' is not quite the same. The secret of Rome and of her eternal charm is that she destroys the notion of time. Nowhere else in the world have I been so conscious of living at once in the distant and less distant past, the present and the future. Perhaps I may be pardoned for quoting a passage I wrote fifteen years ago upon the spirit of Rome: 'In and around her walls,' I said, 'men have striven, hated, loved, ruled wisely and unjustly, oppressed, slain, been slain, dreamed dreams of power fulfilled and unfulfilled, hoped, despaired, and achieved. Everything has been; what is, will pass—and yet there is ever the record of great things done and the promise of great things to do. Thus Rome gives, not sadness, but a rich calm born of a sense that, though some efforts fail, others succeed and all may be worth making for their own sake if not for the extrinsic reward they bring. Within her walls a man may learn that his individual importance is, indeed, infinitesimal; but he will not be discouraged, for she teaches also that notable things have been done through the agency of minute unimportances such as his. If he learn to smile at the illusions men have cherished and cherish, his smile will be subtle and kindly, not a sour grimace. He will come to view life with a comprehending and comprehensive, nay, a truly catholic eye, able to see in the imperishable lore of pagan seers a guide to

wisdom in this world and, in that of their Christian successors, some ground to trust that he who walks straightly according to his lights, need fear naught of worlds beyond human ken. This is the secret of Rome. It is a place of visions and of vision, retrospective, actual and prospective, surpassing historical dimensions. In Rome men may take counsel of the gods and taste of eternity.'

How does the standpoint of the Vatican fit in with this reading of 'Eternal Rome.' From the Vatican standpoint it is worse than useless to criticise a Pope, or the Papacy, on grounds of sentiment or even for reasons of Christianity—as Christianity may be conceived by what the Vatican thinks sectarian or unauthorized minds. Virtually, the Vatican claims possession of the Absolute Truth, of the 'Thing in Itself,' the reality behind appearances for which philosophers vainly seek. The spirit of Catholic Rome lies in the persuasion—which non-Catholics and Protestants decline to admit—that in regard to Faith and Morals the Roman Church possesses the Absolute Truth which its head, the Supreme Pontiff, is empowered infallibly to proclaim. However carefully the doctrine of Papal infallibility may, in theory, be limited by insistence that the Pope is infallible only when speaking from the Chair of St. Peter upon Faith and Morals, the influence of the doctrine upon those who surround the Pontiff, and upon the Pontiff himself, is perceptible in many matters other than those of immediate religious or moral concern.

Roman Catholicism, as understood in Rome, consists in an age-long practice of spiritual and, until 1870, of temporal government. And when the forces of United Italy entered Rome through a breach in the wall near Porta Pia on September 20, 1870, and occupied the Papal States, the 'Roman Question' became acute. It affected and embittered relations between the greatest Italian institution, the Roman Church, and the Government and people of the United Italian kingdom, until the late Pope Pius XI settled it by the Lateran Treaty of February 11, 1939, with Signor Mussolini and by the Concordat with Italy. As a protest against the Italian conquest of Rome and the Papal States, four Popes—Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X and Benedict XV—had, since 1870, remained voluntary 'prisoners' within the Vatican walls; though, had they chosen to leave them, they would have been reverently greeted by the people of Rome and protected by

the Italian Government. By the settlement of the 'Roman Question' ten years ago, Pope Pius XI was recognized as Temporal Sovereign over a small, symbolic Vatican City, which includes the great basilica of St. Peter's, a railway station and other facilities for independent communication with the outside world. But his declining years were overshadowed by the growth of a new conflict both with Italy and Germany over the unchristian doctrines that are implied by the Fascist and Nazi worship of the Totalitarian State as the only source of human rights.

Against these doctrines the late Pope protested vigorously. He came, in fact, to be regarded, far beyond the limits of his own Church and even of Christendom, as a champion of that respect for the human personality which is the basis of the whole philosophy of freedom. In June 1931, and again in March 1937, the Pope repudiated the Italian Fascist and the German Nazi deification of the State. He said: 'Whoever detaches race, or the nation, or the State, or the form of State, or the Government, from the temporal scale of values, and raises them to be the supreme model, and deifies them with idolatrous worship, falsifies the divinely created order of things.'

Had he lived to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the settlement of the 'Roman Question' Pope Pius XI might have made it the occasion for another protest against what he felt to be the Italian violation of the Concordat by the adoption of German racial doctrines. He could not and would not admit that differences of blood deprive any race of the right to be regarded equally as the children of God. Shortly before his death he again emphasized the fundamental Christian teaching that the human personality is sacred, that men are a great single family—mankind. This, he added, is what the Church understands by sound racial doctrine, worthy of individuals within the great human collectivity.

These challenges to Italian Fascist and German Nazi philosophy render the choice of a successor to Pius XI a matter of world-wide interest. The Cardinals, princes of the Church, who are about to meet in conclave—immured in the Vatican and unable to leave it until their work is done—have now to discharge a task befitting the rank they hold. The name 'Cardinal' comes from the Latin word 'cardo,' a hinge; and upon the impending decision of the Sacred College much may

Prime Minister announced that 'certain consultations' were proceeding with other Governments, and that he wished to make perfectly clear the position of His Majesty's Government before those consultations were concluded. Then he added:

'I have now to inform the House that during that period, in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to this effect. I may add that the French Government have authorized me to make it plain that they stand in the same position in this matter as do His Majesty's Government.'

This announcement was warmly cheered by a crowded House. It was understood to mean that in view of possible German threats to the independent existence of Poland, and in view of Herr Hitler's brutal and faithless destruction of Czechoslovakia, Great Britain and France had given a pledge to Poland that any German attack upon her, which the Poles felt they must resist, would at once bring Great Britain and France to her support.

At least this was how the House of Commons and the country understood the Prime Minister's words. He explained later that his statement 'was intended to cover what might be called an interim period' during which efforts would be made to build up a system of resistance to aggression with the other Powers opposed to international lawlessness.

But in newspaper comment, and elsewhere, it was alleged that the new obligations which this country had assumed did not bind Great Britain to defend every inch of the present frontiers of Poland. The keyword in the Prime Minister's declaration, it was argued, was not 'integrity' but 'independence.'

So serious was the impression which this comment made that an official statement at once repudiated it. Nevertheless, an uneasy feeling persisted. The Prime Minister had obviously meant what he said; and it was neither right nor just that foreign countries or our own people should be left in any doubt whether he had not, in reality, been playing upon words. Fortunately an opportunity to clear matters up beyond

the possibility of serious doubt had already been provided. The Opposition had demanded that a debate upon foreign affairs should be held before the Easter recess, and the Government had fixed Monday, April 3, for the debate. The original intention of the Opposition, and even of Conservative critics of the Government's policy, had no doubt been to impress upon Parliament and the country the necessity for some firm stand against any possible ambition of Nazi Germany to dominate Europe, and ultimately the world, by force. But after the Prime Minister's declaration the debate was bound to take on another character; and its character was certain to be determined by the way in which the Prime Minister would deal with the suggestion that his pledge to Poland referred only to her 'independence' and not to her substantial or total territorial integrity.

So the second momentous event of the week was Mr. Neville Chamberlain's authoritative interpretation on Monday of what he had said last Friday. Between those two days he had undoubtedly given private assurances to the Opposition leaders. But the House as a whole awaited his public words with the keenest interest. Here is what he said:

'The declaration that I made on Friday has been described in a phrase so apt that it has been widely taken up—that is to say as a cover-note issued in advance of a complete insurance policy. I myself emphasized its transitional or temporary character, and that description of a cover-note is not at all a bad one so far as it goes; but where I think it is altogether incomplete is that while, of course, the issue of a cover-note does imply that it is to be followed by something more substantial, it is the nature of the complete insurance policy itself which is such a tremendous departure from anything which this country has undertaken hitherto. It does really constitute a new point—I would say a new epoch—in the course of our foreign policy. . . . I confess that I was myself surprised that there should be any misunderstanding, for I thought it was clear and plain to all who run or read. Of course a declaration of that importance is not concerned with some minor little frontier incident. If the independence of the State of Poland should be threatened—and if it were threatened, I have no doubt that the Polish people would resist any attempt on it—then the declaration which I made means that France and ourselves would immediately come to her assistance.'

A very impressive manifestation of unanimity followed Mr. Chamberlain's statement. The Labour spokesman who opened the debate had given in advance his adherence to what he understood to be the present position of the Government. He had said that when the House rose it would be clear to the world that in Britain 'there was universal detestation of recent events in Europe, a loathing of the human suffering which accompanied and followed them, and the determination of our people to co-operate with all other nations in establishing a formidable and insurmountable barrier against future aggression.' The leader of the Liberal Opposition, together with Mr. Winston Churchill, Mr. Anthony Eden and Mr. Lloyd George, took up substantially the same position after the Prime Minister had spoken. The result was an effective unanimity not less striking than that which the House of Commons displayed on August 3, 1914, in response to Sir Edward Grey's historic speech upon the German violation of Belgian neutrality.

Monday's debate was, therefore, the second important event of the week. The Prime Minister's 'complete insurance policy' against aggression looks like the working out of the policy on which he fought the general election of 1935—namely, that there should be no cowardly surrender to aggressors. Then, in his electoral statement on November 2, 1935, at Birmingham, he said that the first object of British policy was the establishment of settled peace, and that the League of Nations alone could give us peace by the collective action of its members. 'Only in this way,' Mr. Chamberlain had added, 'can we make it plain to would-be aggressors that it does not pay to attack another nation in violation of engagements solemnly undertaken.'

In fact, Mr. Chamberlain's statement of November 1935 was in full harmony with Article 16 of the League Covenant which declares that if any member of the League should resort to war in disregard of its obligations 'it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other members of the League.' It is true that the 'complete insurance policy' which, it was hoped, the League Covenant would offer has, during the past three years, lost much of its validity. It may also be true that the 'complete insurance policy' which is now being negotiated will make no reference to the League Covenant. There may be force in the argument that the

definite and precise pledge which we and France have given to Poland is more akin to the pledge we gave to Belgium in 1839—and honoured in 1914 by declaring war upon Germany when she invaded Belgian soil. To this extent the pledge to Poland may mark a 'new point' and the beginning of a 'new epoch' in the course of our foreign policy. Yet, in my own view, the opening of this new epoch would hardly have been greeted with such unanimous approval if it were not felt to be a return to the principle of withstanding aggression by collective action which lay behind the establishment of the League of Nations itself.

What is felt to be new is a British pledge to protect a country in Eastern Europe where we have few, if any, direct material interests. Hitherto our definite commitments have been the reciprocal obligation between Great Britain and France to lend each other support in case of attack upon either. The reciprocal quality of this commitment is, as I said three weeks ago, something new in Anglo-French relations. Our other commitments on the continent of Europe were outlined four or five years ago in a State Paper initialled by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald as Prime Minister in the National Government. It recorded the old truth that the independence of Belgium and Holland is a vital British interest which we should in all circumstances defend. So the policy of definite commitments to uphold what we look upon as vital interests is not new. The newness of our pledge to Poland lies in the fact that it is given as a warning to all whom it may concern that we shall resist any attempt at world domination in any quarter.

It is now clear that the Prime Minister—while hoping sincerely that his policy of appeasement would bring peace to Europe and the world—has long feared that some stand might have to be made. He quoted in the House of Commons on Monday a passage from a message which he broadcast on Tuesday, September 27, last year—two days before he left to conclude the Munich Agreement with Herr Hitler. One passage in it ran: 'If I were convinced that any nation had made up its mind to dominate the world by the fear of its force I should feel that it must be resisted. Under such a domination life for people who believe in liberty would not be worth living.' Recent events have now, it would seem, brought Mr. Chamberlain—and many other people—to the verge of con-

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viction that Nazi Germany has made up her mind to dominate the world by the fear of her force, and that she must be resisted.

It is on this point that our people are united. They know that the German cry of 'encirclement' is a fantastic product of misguided imagination; and that no country would welcome more heartily than Great Britain proof that Germany desires only to be a good neighbour in a European family of equal peoples. The history of the 'encirclement' cry in Germany goes back more than thirty-five years. There was no truth in it during the early years of this century when Prince Bülow raised it, and there is none now, nor will there be even if Soviet Russia should join in underwriting the 'complete insurance policy' against aggression. Among the further statements in Mr. Chamberlain's speech on Monday none received more general approval than his declaration that whatever ideological differences there may be between the British outlook and that of the Soviet Union 'those ideological differences do not really count in a question of this kind. What we are concerned with,' he said, 'is to preserve our independence, and when I say our independence I do not mean only that of this country. I mean the independence of all States which may be threatened by aggression in pursuit of such a policy as I have described. Therefore, we welcome the co-operation of any country, whatever may be its internal system of government, not in aggression, but in resistance to aggression.'

So, at last, we have a firm and united national front against any violent threat to our freedom and to the liberties of others. We have a cause plain enough and big enough for all our people and, indeed, the whole peace-loving world to understand. We are again a united nation, and the public warning has been given. However the position may develop, Germany and her friends cannot now assert that they were not warned in time.

ANGLO-POLISH ALLIANCE

The position did develop very swiftly. On April 6, 1939, Mr. Neville Chamberlain told the House of Commons that conversations with the Polish Foreign Minister, Colonel Beck, who came to London on April 3, had covered a wide field and showed that

the two governments were in complete agreement upon certain general principles. They had agreed to replace the British unilateral assurance to Poland by a permanent and reciprocal arrangement under which the Polish Government would consider themselves bound to assist the British Government on the same conditions as those contained in the temporary and unilateral British assurance. In plain language this meant a bilateral Anglo-Polish alliance.

Next day, April 7, was Good Friday. It brought the news of a bombardment of four Albanian ports by Italian warships, and of the invasion of Albania by Italian troops. These acts of aggression caused a crisis in the Near East and aroused indignation in Great Britain. Mr. Chamberlain traced the diplomatic story of the crisis in a statement to the House of Commons on April 13, and then said:

Once confidence has been roughly shaken it is not so easily re-established, and His Majesty's Government feel they have both a duty and a service to perform by leaving no doubt in the mind of anybody as to their position. . . . They have come to the conclusion that in the event of any action being taken which clearly threatened the independence of Greece or Roumania, and which the Greek or Roumanian Government respectively considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Greek or Roumanian Government, as the case might be, all the support in their power. . . . I understand that the French Government are making a similar declaration this afternoon. . . . So far as I am concerned, nothing that has happened has in any way altered my conviction that the policy of His Majesty's Government in signing the Anglo-Italian Agreement a year ago was right. I do not say that in order to raise controversies which belong to the past, but in order to avoid any misunderstanding of my present attitude. I rejoiced at the restoration of friendly feelings between the Italian people and the people of this country, both for its own sake and because I believed that it could make a valuable contribution to the general peace. I frankly confess my deep disappointment at an action by the Italian Government which has cast a shadow over the genuineness of their intentions to carry out their undertakings.

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Mr. Chamberlain's statement met with a very mixed reception in the House of Commons, Mr. Attlee in particular declaring, as Leader of the Opposition, that the Anglo-Italian Agreement had from the first been 'part of the mistaken policy of unilateral appeasement. . . . The rape of Albania is to the Anglo-Italian Agreement what the destruction of Czechoslovakia was to the Munich Agreement.'

WHAT OF SOVIET RUSSIA?

In my next broadcast talk on April 26—which, for reasons I must explain, was to be the last for some months—I glanced round the world and tried to take stock of it. Two countries, of which both were to some extent 'unknown quantities,' stood in the background of the international situation. Great Britain and Germany, on the other hand, were comparatively 'known quantities.' Great Britain, I said, 'has pledged herself to help in defending Poland, Roumania and Greece (not to mention France and other countries) should they be attacked; and it is pretty clear that attack upon them is likely to come only from Germany, Italy or their allies. But it is not yet so clear what Soviet Russia and the United States would do if Great Britain had to be as good as her word. Nor is it quite clear whether the British pledges to Poland, Greece, Roumania (and, perhaps, Turkey) could be made effective without the active support of Soviet Russia. I added:

The active, as distinguished from the moral, support of the United States is another uncertain quantity in our world problem. And the likelihood of active American support may depend in some degree upon what Soviet Russia does. . . . The bulk of the United States Navy has just been ordered back from the Atlantic into the Pacific. Why? Because, among other reasons, the United States does not want to be caught at a disadvantage by Japan in case the parties to the 'Anti-Comintern,' that is to say, the 'Anti-Russian' Pact, should decide to make war. Japan is a party to the Anti-Russian Pact. The other parties are Germany, Italy, Hungary and Spain. Japan has overrun a good part of China in whose independence the United States is interested; and Russia has been steadily helping China to resist. There may come a

moment when the United States would feel bound to check Japanese expansion in the Pacific. If so, the conflict would hardly be a naval conflict only. Russian armies on the border of Manchuria, and elsewhere in the Far East, might take a hand in the military side of it. So it would not be surprising to learn that relations between Washington and Moscow have long been at least as close and cordial as relations between Moscow and London.

Earlier in April President Roosevelt had sent a message to Hitler and Mussolini and had asked them for a promise that they would not invade or attack thirty States which he mentioned by name. Soviet Russia was one of the thirty; and the President's message was welcomed in Moscow quite as warmly and promptly as in Paris and London. Whatever we may think of Soviet Russia, I said, it is beyond doubt that for the past eighteen years, at any rate, her policy has been directed against war. And I went on:

What do we think, what ought we to think, of Soviet Russia? If the democracies enlist her aid in withstanding the totalitarian dictatorships, will not the 'democracies' be trying to drive out the Nazi-Fascist devil in the name of a Communist Beelzebub? Is the Nazi-Fascist threat to what we call 'Western civilization' really much worse, or any worse, than the Russian Communist threat? Adversity may make strange bedfellows; but might not Russian Communism end by kicking Western civilization and democracy out of the bed quite as brutally as Nazi-Fascism would like to do?

However 'undiplomatic' it may seem at this moment, I for one do not think we should evade these questions. Lots of people are asking them, and are at a loss for an answer. I have my own answer and may suggest it presently. But I should like to put the case as it is put by an anonymous European statesman—who may belong to an anti-Communist country bordering on Russia—in the current number of a leading American quarterly review.

'Misled by the nationalist and racial slogans of Hitlerism and Fascism,' he writes, 'many democratic statesmen long believed that the essential conflict was between German and Italian nationalism on the one side and Communism on the other. Only recently have they realized that the basic social principles of Fascism and National Socialism closely resemble

those of Communism. Fundamentally Fascist dictatorship fights Communism as a competitor, but its chief aim is the destruction of democracy, for that is its deadly enemy. Any war which Hitler and Mussolini may undertake, whether for European or for colonial expansion, will be primarily an ideological war between the principles of State totalitarianism and the principles of democracy.'

I think this puts the case well. I know that a good many democratic statesmen in Western countries have thought how nice it would be if Nazi-Fascism and Communism could smash each other and leave democracy unhurt and triumphant. But they have pulled wry faces when they have been asked how they would like Nazi-Fascism and Russian Communism to come to an agreement so that Russia would stand aside while Nazi-Fascism assailed or smashed the democracies.

In the words of a (now exiled) German technician who knows Russia well and thinks highly of her mechanical and industrial achievements: 'If Russia and Germany come together, God help us all.'

Now, if Nazi Germany and Russia have not come together it is not for want of trying, at any rate on the part of Germany. Nor is it the fault of some British and French politicians who have cold-shouldered Russia and have done their best to drive her into the arms of Germany. The reason for the Russian refusal to link up with Germany may lie deeper than any diplomatic calculations; and it can perhaps be found in the change of method which Stalin introduced after he succeeded Lenin as the ruler of Soviet Russia. He took as his watchword: 'Socialism in one country'; not, as it had been under Lenin and Trotsky, 'Socialism [or Communism] everywhere by means of a proletarian world revolution.'

The effects of this change of method have been far-reaching. It is one thing for a vast country like Russia to strain even its great resources for the overthrow of capitalism by revolutionary Communism everywhere, and quite another thing for that country to try to establish itself as a successful socialist state, and to trust that its example will one day encourage other countries to do likewise. In the former case, upheavals, revolutions and war in the rest of the world might be expected to bring grist to the Russian Communist mill. In the latter case, Russia would need a long period of peace to

develop her resources, educate her people, make herself strong to withstand attack and to cultivate friendly relations with her neighbours. And this is precisely what Soviet Russia, under Stalin, has been trying to do, and what she has done with a remarkable degree of success.

In the process Russia herself has changed so considerably that she has sometimes seemed to be moving away from a Communist towards a moderate Socialist ideal. As the leading British authority on Russia, Sir Bernard Pares, an inveterate critic of Communism, has pointed out, Stalin has given Russia a 'tremendous practical education both in administrative and economic work which has done much to create a new Russia.' He has endowed the country with a heavy industrial plant of its own which enables it to make its own machinery, machine-tools, tractors, armaments and munitions. (Incidentally, this heavy plant has enabled Russia so to equip the Chinese armies that they could prevent Japan from conquering the whole of their country.) Stalin is also said to have raised the proportion of Russians who can read and write from twenty-five to seventy-five per cent. He has restored the right of individuals to own property, and has allowed the peasants not only to invest but to bequeath their savings. He has reinstated the family as a social institution and has taught children to respect their parents—the exact opposite of what Hitler's system is doing in Germany. And Stalin himself has become a Russian national leader instead of being an international revolutionary theorist bent on bringing about violent Communist revolution in other lands.

For all these changes Russia has needed, and still needs, peace. While putting down ruthlessly the partisans of the older revolutionary method, Stalin and his Foreign Secretary, Litvinov, have sought to reassure Russia's neighbours—with the exception of Japan, whose ambition to conquer Asia was well known to them. And since the advent of Hitler, Stalin has taken very seriously Hitler's plan (laid down in *Mein Kampf*) to make Germany the mistress of Europe, as a stepping-stone to the mastery of the world, by securing control of Central and South-Eastern Europe and by conquering the greater part of European Russia.

So Stalin began by making a non-aggression pact, equal to a defensive alliance, with Turkey under Mustapha Kemal, or Ataturk. In this way he protected the Caucasus, his native

Georgia, and the oil wells of Baku from attack by way of Turkey. Then he concluded non-aggression pacts with Poland, Roumania and other European neighbours of Russia. With Russian help, the Roumanian Foreign Minister, Titulescu, succeeded in forming the Balkan Entente between Turkey, Roumania, Yugoslavia and Greece. Meanwhile Russia concluded a defensive alliance with France, and applied for admission to the League of Nations. The key to all these arrangements was Russia's desire to complete her own internal consolidation without war.

Today the issue of peace or war, and, in the event of war, the question of victory or defeat for the Western democracies, may depend upon the readiness of Russia to join the anti-aggression front which—since the destruction of Czechoslovakia by Germany and the rape of Albania by Italy—Great Britain and France have been endeavouring to build up in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. In effect, it comes down to this: Is Great Britain prepared to ally herself with Soviet Russia? Poland, standing between Russia and Germany, may not relish the prospect of an alliance with Russia which might make a battleground of Polish territory. Roumania has, in the past, too often felt the pressure, and the ruthlessness, of Imperial Russia on her northern border to wish to see Russian troops again on her soil. But both Poland and Roumania find themselves, so to speak, between the devil and the deep sea. If they will not trust Russia they may be crushed by Germany; and, without Russia, the British pledge may not avail to save either of them. So it is conceivable that a way out might be found in a Russo-British alliance which, while securing Russian help for Poland and Roumania in case of need, would also guarantee their independence and the integrity of their territory if Nazi-Fascist aggression should bring on war.

The Anglo-Russian negotiations are reported to be making good progress, and an Anglo-Turkish agreement to be within sight, if not actually reached. Hitler complains of the 'encirclement' of peace-loving Germany by the warlike democratic Powers, and Mussolini asks who can doubt his peaceful intentions, because there is to be a great Fascist exhibition at Rome in 1942. What the world really wants to hear is how Hitler will meet on Friday the challenge conveyed to him and Mussolini in President Roosevelt's message. Hitler may try to regain the initiative he held so long. He may quote the

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answers he has extracted from several small countries that they do not feel threatened by Germany. He may once more denounce Russia as the enemy of mankind, and declaim against the democracies for having anything to do with her. The one thing he cannot say is that Germany upholds the individual and political freedom which is the essence of democracy.

And my answer to those who would refuse Russian help for the defence of their freedom is that when an honest wayfarer is beset by fellows with designs upon his belongings and his liberty, he will not, if he is wise, decline the help of another stout wayfarer merely because he is told that his would-be helper's opinions are unorthodox.

AN INTERLUDE

During the months of May, June, July and the greater part of August 1939, I was too busy with matters that could not be the subject of any broadcast talk to continue my comments on world affairs. From the early months of 1933 onwards, when a steady stream of political refugees began to flow from Germany after the advent of Hitler on January 30 that year, I had tried to help a number of these unfortunate men by encouraging them to work on various aspects of Nazi policy and intrigues. I raised a private fund to save some of them from acute want, and put into it all I could afford to give and every penny I could earn, or beg or borrow from generous friends. One result was that information upon Nazi doings reached me steadily and in considerable volume. I gave the substance of it to the Departments of State most likely to be interested, and I placed it at the disposal of a group of public men of all parties who included Mr. Winston Churchill, Sir Archibald Sinclair and a number of other Conservative, Liberal and Labour politicians.

A SIGNIFICANT REPORT

In the spring of 1939 one of my informants in a neutral country assured me that if adequate funds were forthcoming it would be possible to obtain from the innermost circle of the Nazi party trustworthy knowledge of Hitler's main designs. The sum he

mentioned was beyond my means. A public-spirited relative came to the rescue by supplying a good proportion of it, with the result that early in July 1939 I was enabled to put into the hands of leading British ministers and of many members of both Houses of Parliament a report on Nazi policy of which events were to substantiate the accuracy before the year was out. The report declared that the ultimate aim of Nazi policy was to create a Germanic World Empire of unassailable strength without the risks of a world war, if this should prove possible. In 1938 its immediate aim had been to subjugate Czechoslovakia. In 1939 its immediate aim was to subjugate Poland without war or, at worst, after a short localized war. Hitler did not yet feel strong enough to face a long war, but he was anxious to carry through speedily another instalment of his programme by subjugating Poland and, thereafter, the Baltic and the Danubian States. When this had been done, there might be a prospect of comparative tranquillity while Germany was organizing the territories between her own borders and those of Russia. Then Hitler would seek either to undermine, disintegrate and revolutionize Soviet Russia, or to link Russian 'space' with the 'imperial space' of the German World Empire, so as to win a war against the Western Powers if they should resist him. Hitler was seeking good relations with Moscow in the hope of localizing or isolating his conflict with Poland, not because his 'imperial aims' in the East had changed.

The report explained further that up to the end of 1938 Hitler had believed that his eastern policy could be carried through with Polish help. He hoped, too, that this policy would be tolerated by Great Britain and France while Roumania was also being brought, with Polish co-operation, into the German sphere of influence. A basis for the disintegration of the Russian Ukraine would thus have been assured. Only then would the Polish Ukraine be 'liberated' in its turn, and the full Nazi aims be enforced upon Poland. These plans were thwarted by the Polish alliances with Great Britain and France. Should, however, the Western Powers attempt to block Hitler's road to the East, with or without Russian help, he would treat Poland as his most dangerous foe. The union of Danzig with Germany would be proclaimed, and the main strength of the German army be con-

centrated on the borders of Poland, while the Siegfried Line in the West would be defensively held.

German strategy, the reported continued, will aim at crushing the Polish army by a 'lightning' operation which, Hitler thinks, could be carried through in a few weeks. Though Hitler still hoped that the Western Powers would be militarily inactive at the beginning of a German-Polish war he felt it urgent to end such a war quickly. Germany did not expect Great Britain and France to favour a military offensive against her, especially if Franco-British hopes of Russian help should prove illusory. Should the Western Powers nevertheless attack, the German army in the West would stand on the defensive until Poland had been crushed. Then the main German forces would be switched over to the West, though there would be no air raids on England or France so long as these two countries should refrain from air attack of Germany; and, concurrently with her military concentration on the West, Germany would begin a propaganda peace-offensive in which she and the Rome-Berlin Axis would offer immediate peace to the Western Powers who, if they rejected the offer, would be made responsible for the devastation that would ensue. Special appeals to support this peace-offensive would be issued to the governments and peoples of Holland, Belgium and Switzerland. In Hitler's belief the success of this peace offensive would cause him to be acclaimed as the saviour of the peace of the world.

The actual course of the 'phoney' war in the autumn and winter of 1939, and especially the peace offensive which Hitler tried to conduct through the sovereigns and governments of Holland and Belgium in November, were to provide strong retrospective confirmation of this remarkable report. What impression it made upon the British Ministers who saw it in July 1939 I cannot guess. It governed my own view of the outlook; and since this view could not be expressed in a broadcast talk so long as there seemed the slightest chance that war might be averted, I stayed away from the microphone until 16 August. On that day I gave a somewhat rambling general talk, more philosophical than political in character, in which I spoke of a 'peace front' which Great Britain, France and Poland were trying to consolidate against aggression. One passage in it that bore on the political outlook ran:

Great Britain is looked upon as the mainstay of this 'peace front.' This is why violent anti-British campaigns are being carried on in Germany, Japan, and in the regions of China under Japanese control. Behind these campaigns there is a subtle method of aggression which not everybody understands. The method is to work up a 'local' crisis somewhere—at Tientsin, Danzig, or in Hungary, just as it was worked up last year about the Sudeten Germans of Czechoslovakia—and then to spread the idea that none of these 'local' crises is really worth a war, since each of them can be settled by making concessions. It is a method of gaining piecemeal by threat of aggression at apparently minor points what could not be gained immediately by actual aggression at any major point. But when the minor points shall have been gained, one after the other, and the aggressors feel that neither Poland, nor Hungary, nor, say, Yugoslavia or Roumania, is likely to give them trouble, the threat will be renewed against some major point, and Great Britain and France will be given a choice between total surrender and war against an aggressor far stronger than he now is.

This was my last talk before German aggression began at a major point, against Poland on September 1, 1939, and Great Britain and France declared war on September 3. Throughout September, October and the first half of November unofficial broadcasting was suspended. A rigid censorship was imposed, and 'news' rightly took precedence of 'views.' I doubt whether my own 'views' during that period would have passed the censorship, and whether I should have cared to broadcast them even if I had been invited to do so. But there was no censorship of views or opinion in the British press. So, for the sake of recording what I thought and felt in those anxious weeks and months, I may quote from an article which I wrote for the *Fortnightly Review* of October 1939:

It has been said and written that the outbreak of war at this moment is due to one man and to one man alone—Adolf Hitler. This is a dangerous half-truth. Even did Hitler not represent the doctrines and ambitions of pan-Germanism in its extremist form, tricked out with mystic nonsense about 'the Aryan race' and 'blood and soil,' the truth would remain that he has been, for years past, recognizable and recognized

as a homicidal maniac possessed by the lust of power, and that his writings, words and deeds have certified him as such. If a homicidal maniac be not restrained by others, is he alone answerable for the murders he will continue to commit? How came it, then, that British and other statesmen, with the fullest information at their disposal, could believe, or could behave as though they believed, that Hitler was a politician like unto themselves with whom every difference could be settled by 'negotiation'? This mystery will one day need to be cleared up. So persistent was the fatuous yearning for a 'settlement by negotiation' that it led us to one of the most critical moments in our recent history.

On the night of Saturday, September 2, more than thirty-six hours after the German invasion of Poland had undoubtedly brought the Anglo-Polish Alliance into active force, official spokesmen in both Houses of Parliament declared that 'If the German Government should agree to withdraw their forces, then His Majesty's Government would be willing to regard the position as being the same as it was before the German forces crossed the Polish frontier; that is to say, the way would be open to discussion between the German and Polish Governments of the matters at issue between them, on the understanding that the settlement arrived at was one that safeguarded the vital interests of Poland, and was secured by an international guarantee.'

If, at that moment, a vote of censure had been moved in the House of Commons, it would have been very strongly supported. Mr. Arthur Greenwood, deputy-leader of the Labour Opposition, straightway became the spokesman of the country and of the House. He was greeted by cries of: 'Speak for Britain!' from the ministerial benches, and he had the whole House with him when he demanded 'that there shall be no more devices for dragging out what has been dragged out too long.' The moment we look like weakening, he went on, 'dictatorship knows we are beaten. We are not beaten—we shall not be beaten.'

Next day the news that we were at war was received with feelings of intense relief, so deep had been throughout the country what Mr. Greenwood then described as the 'resentment, apprehension and anger' that had reigned over parliamentary proceedings the night before. This was no exaggeration. In an observation of our public affairs which now extends

over nearly half a century, I have never seen the temper of our people so ugly as it became on that Saturday night after the ministerial statements had been broadcast to the nation.

The prompt formation of the War Cabinet, with Mr. Winston Churchill in it and Mr. Anthony Eden on its threshold, increased the relief given by the prospect that 'negotiation' and 'appeasement' would henceforth be at an end. A War Cabinet is something. We do not yet know whether it will be the *Government for War* which the country needs and must have. As a reassuring element in the immediate background stands the seeming paradox that a nation which hated war and was devoted to peace should have felt relieved that war was at last declared. To this paradox the Prime Minister supplied the key when he, in his turn, won the cheers of the House on Sunday, September 3, by concluding a somewhat lachrymose personal statement with the words: 'I trust I may live to see the day when Hitlerism has been destroyed and a liberated Europe has been re-established.' The nation does not *trust*; it is determined to destroy Hitlerism.

By common consent 'Hitlerism' is the enemy. 'Hitlerism' is something more and something worse than the 'Prussian militarism' which was the enemy in 1914-18. Common to both is the immoral doctrine that Might is Right, and the Prussian conception of the State which Hegel deified as 'God's movement in the world,' 'the absolute power on earth' and 'an end in itself.' New in Hitlerism is Hitler's own conviction that he himself is divine. In words which he used to one of his former advisers: 'In so far as there is a God, I am He.' Even William of Hohenzollern, whose familiarity with the Almighty astonished the world in the closing years of the nineteenth century, never went beyond speaking of 'My old ally, God.'

But behind Hitlerism stands, as it stood behind William of Hohenzollern, the Prussian militarist tradition which, it was fondly hoped, the war of 1914-18 had broken for ever. The reasons why it was not broken enter largely into the background of the present war. They merit careful examination. Chief among them was the belief, sedulously inculcated upon the German people for generations, that under Prussian leadership the German Army held the secret of invincibility—a belief founded upon its victories in the three wars of 1864, 1866 and 1870-1. All competent witnesses of the rise of Hitlerism in Germany agree that its most persuasive appeal

to the German people was its constant denial of the fact that Germany had been defeated in the war of 1914-18, and its emphatic assertions that just when the German armies were on the eve of triumph they were stabbed in the back and betrayed by Jews, Marxists and other traitors at home. As Mr. Edgar Ansell Mowrer truly said in his book *Germany Puts the Clock Back*:

'It was not imperialistic scheming but vanity, amounting almost to a vital need, that caused the people to deny reality in the form of its own war responsibility and defeat. What to foreigners seemed wrongheadedness or sheer duplicity, was mere incapacity to face a truth incompatible with the national self-esteem. For a creed is doubly necessary to men who can never quite decide between opposites, who oscillate between jelly-like receptivity and pompous nationalism, unable to accept any form, yet unceasingly jealous of shaplier nations, conscious of immaturity, of lack of face, yet somehow proud of it all as far richer in promise than the neat outlines of Latins and Anglo-Saxons.'

With this analysis of the German national character, written by a sympathetic observer who had lived and worked in Germany for twelve years before Hitler came into power, I was in full agreement. I thought it deserved the attention of those who, quite honestly, were saying that while we were fighting Hitlerism we had no quarrel with 'the German people.' I concluded that Hitlerism would not be efficiently destroyed unless Nazi Germany should suffer total and unquestionable military defeat, or should blow up from within when defeat was in sight; and that we should need to be wary about accepting any sudden political transformation of Germany as evidence that we were dealing with 'the German people,' not with Prussian militarism more or less cleverly disguised. To this belief I held throughout the years of war, and it coloured my outlook when, in mid-November, I was asked to resume my broadcast talks, not immediately on 'world affairs' but on 'the week's news.' The tone and shape of these talks will appear in the following chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

THE WAR: EARLY PHASES

November 1939 to January 1940

IN November 1939 the Empire Service of the B.B.C. thought it would be well if I could comment on the week's news in a style simple enough to be readily understood by listeners with a limited knowledge of English. Since 1932, when I had written some articles on international topics in language deliberately free from diplomatic or journalistic jargon, I had cultivated the habit of using, wherever possible, words of one syllable, and phrases of almost elementary structure. On this account Mr. C. K. Ogden, the originator of 'Basic English,' had republished some of these articles in a little book with my text on one page and a Basic English version of it on the opposite page. So it was thought that if I could deal with war news in the same way my talks might interest many listeners throughout the world who paid little heed to the more stilted language of official bulletins. I promised to try.

Another circumstance which made the experiment seem worth while was that British official statements were looked upon abroad as 'propaganda'; and, since German propagandists invariably gave the lie to them, it was felt desirable that they should be supported by independent testimony. Rightly or wrongly I had gained a reputation for unofficial frankness of opinion. However little this reputation may have commended me to official circles at home, it became a positive advantage in the eyes—or the ears—of listeners in the Dominions and in foreign countries. More than once, when leading foreign newspapers had been officially offered articles by

recognized British experts, the offer had been declined. But, in one case at least, its rejection was accompanied by an expression of readiness to print anything I might write because I was believed to be independent. A similar consideration may have been in the minds of the B.B.C. 'Empire' staff when they asked me to resume my talks. I agreed to resume them on condition that the various censors should interfere as little as possible with whatever views I might express, and should only cut out anything that might be of value to the enemy.

A 'PEACE OFFENSIVE'

Therefore my first war talk on November 17 said:

Compared with the war of 1914 this is a slow-moving war. Some people even think it tiresome because no big battle has yet been fought. If these people will only try to remember on any day of the week all that has happened since the same day last week, they will find that quite a lot has happened. I want to jog their memories.

A little more than a week ago a bomb burst in an underground hall at Munich in Bavaria, where Hitler and his chief companions were holding a meeting. The Germans call the place a 'beer cellar.' Munich is famous for its beer. It has several big breweries, each of which has a large building where its beer is sold. The lowest floor of these buildings is called the 'cellar.' It was in the cellar of one of them that Hitler held a meeting in November 1923, and fired a revolver into the ceiling as a signal for his attempt to turn out the Government of Bavaria. The attempt failed. Some of Hitler's companions were shot. Hitler got away, but was soon caught and imprisoned in a fortress. Yet that beer-cellar meeting of 1923 has always been looked upon as the beginning of his rise to power. So every year another meeting is held in the same cellar on the same day to celebrate that beginning.

Hitler has many enemies. So many people have been killed and tortured under his authority that he is always afraid of being shot at. Wherever he goes he is surrounded by guards. Every place he goes to is searched by his police to make sure that it is safe. Everybody in the beer cellar at Munich last week belonged either to his guards or to his trusted supporters. Yet,

soon after he had finished speaking and had gone away, a bomb burst above the place where he had stood. If he had spoken a little longer he and his chief companions would have been killed. Eight or nine of his supporters were killed, and sixty or seventy wounded. Did Hitler know that the bomb was there? The questions: Who put the bomb there, and how it could have been put there, are still unanswered.

At first Hitler pretended that British agents had put the bomb there. It was even said that Mr. Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, had ordered it to be put there. This story was so silly that nobody believed it. Everybody asked what Hitler's police were doing when they searched the place beforehand. Then another story was told. The bomb, it said, was put there by some of Hitler's own people who were working for the old rulers of Germany, and wished to get rid of Hitler so as to put a king or an emperor on the German throne. This story was more widely believed. A third story is that Field-Marshal Goering, whom Hitler appointed to succeed him if Hitler should die or be killed, wished to take Hitler's place, and to offer terms of peace which Britain and France might accept.

What truth there is in these last two stories I do not know. I know only that Hitler himself would like to get peace if he could get it on his own terms. He is afraid that if the war goes on Germany will either be beaten, and he and his Government be destroyed, or that other Germans will get rid of him and his Government in the hope of making a peace more favourable to Germany. So Hitler may have tried to persuade Holland and Belgium to offer their help in bringing about negotiations for peace.

The offer was suddenly made by the Queen of Holland and the King of the Belgians ten days ago. Many people wondered why they should make the offer at that moment. Both Belgium and Holland had been obliged to call out troops in readiness to resist a German invasion. Germany may have told them that they would not be invaded or attacked if they could get Britain and France to begin negotiations for peace. I think there is some truth in this idea, not because Holland and Belgium were unready to resist attack, but because Hitler was much upset last September when he found that Britain and France were making war against him after he had attacked their ally, Poland. He had thought and hoped that if

he could smash Poland quickly Britain and France would not run the risk of helping her. So he planned to smash Poland quickly, and then to promise friendship to Belgium, Holland and Switzerland, if Britain and France would shut their eyes to what he had done.

The British and French Governments knew all about Hitler's plan before he attacked Poland at the beginning of September. So they were not surprised that he should offer them peace as soon as he had smashed Poland, and should speak kindly to Holland and Belgium. In answer to his offer France and Britain then told Hitler that he must undo the wrong he had done before they could listen to his talk of peace.

This unexpected answer made Hitler very angry. He threatened to blow Britain to bits with his aircraft, and to starve her out with his submarines. Ribbentrop, his Foreign Minister, said that the British Government had been planning this war for years so as to destroy Germany. Neither these threats nor these lies frightened Britain or France.

Then Hitler began to mass his troops on the borders of Belgium and Holland. The Government of Holland prepared to flood part of its country as a defence against a German invasion. Things looked very black when, suddenly, the Queen of Holland and the King of the Belgians made their offer last week to act as go-betweens and to arrange peace terms. The offer was sent to Hitler, to the King of England, and to the President of the French Republic. The King and the President, not their Prime Ministers, politely answered the offer last Sunday.

The King, speaking for the Governments of Great Britain and of the British Dominions, said they would always be glad to look into just terms for a reasonable and certain peace. The British peoples, the King went on, were fighting to make sure that Europe should not have to live again under fear of being attacked by Germany; and if Germany would make any offers that would really help to bring this about, Britain would give them the most serious attention. The French President answered in the same way. But he added that there could not be any lasting peace until Germany had undone the wrong she had done to Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and had given real pledges that she would not do wrong again in future.

Hitler's newspapers and radio were furious when these

answers were given. Hitler himself made no answer to the Queen of Holland and the King of the Belgians. But on Wednesday his Foreign Minister, Ribbentrop, sent for the Ambassadors of Holland and Belgium in Berlin, and talked to them very rudely. He said that the answers of the King of England and the French President were 'impudent,' and boasted that Germany would now begin a 'truly horrible war.' The British and French answers, Ribbentrop declared, had killed the peace offer.

It is said, and I think it is true, that the Governments of Belgium and Holland feel that Hitler and Ribbentrop have shown bad manners in not sending an answer to the Sovereigns of those countries, and in talking rudely to their Ambassadors. I can understand this. What I cannot understand is that anybody should expect people like Hitler and Ribbentrop to show good manners. They are bullies, not gentlemen; and if they have any conscience at all it must be a very bad conscience indeed.

Nobody knows what will happen next. Hitler may try to hit England hard. We are ready for the worst he can do. We are not quite sure whether he and Germany are ready for the worst we can do. Every day, as Mr. Winston Churchill said in a broadcast speech this week, we are getting stronger on land, on sea, and in the air. Though the war seems to move slowly on land it has not been slow on sea. The German submarines, for example, have found it very swift and unpleasant. In the air both the British and the French aircraft have done much more damage to the German aircraft than the German aircraft have done to them. No doubt Hitler could hit us hard if he were to use all Germany's strength. In spite of his boasts and big talk, he has hesitated until now to use all Germany's strength. This may be because his Generals understand, even if he does not, that the hard hitting would be two-sided and that Germany might be hit harder than she would like.

So we are waiting and watching. We are watching Germany, and are keeping an eye on what may happen both in the north-east and the south-east of Europe. In the south-east the outlook is a little foggy. In the north-east things have not gone smoothly between Soviet Russia and Finland. Russia, having got control of Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania, three small States on the southern shore of the Baltic Sea, has been asking Finland, a sturdy little country on the northern

shore of that sea, for naval harbours and other positions which, if Finland gave them up, might make it hard for Finland to defend herself. For several weeks there have been talks between Finland and Russia. Now these talks seem to have come to an end without any agreement. Neither the Finns nor the other countries who are looking on know whether Russia means to squeeze Finland until she gives way, or to attack her if she does not.

A curious thing happened just after the talks between Russia and Finland. The Russian radio and newspapers began to abuse the United States of America. This may have been because the United States asked Russia, some weeks ago, not to hurt Finland. What has the United States to do with Finland which is at least 4,000 miles away from the nearest shores of North America? Part of the answer is that there are a good many Finns in the United States, and that Finland is one of the few countries that have paid their debts to America. Another and more important part is that the people of the United States do not like to see a powerful country like Soviet Russia threaten and try to squeeze a free and democratic little country like Finland. Besides, in America, as in Britain and France, it is felt that the freedom of the Scandinavian countries, especially Norway and Sweden, might be in danger if Finland should come under Russian control. If there are many Finns in the United States, there are far more Swedes and Norwegians among the citizens of that great country.

Now Soviet Russia may not care much about the freedom of Finland or Scandinavia. But Soviet Russia stretches right across Asia to the borders of China and to Vladivostok, which is only a few hundred miles from Japan. American feeling has been disturbed during the past few years by Japanese aggression in China, and has sympathized with Russian efforts to help China in resisting Japan. On the whole, the United States and Russia have been on very friendly terms. So it might not be altogether pleasant for Soviet Russia if the United States should be rendered unfriendly by harsh Russian treatment of Finland, or by any Russian threat to the freedom of Norway and Sweden. This may account for the unkind language which the Russian radio and newspapers have been using this week about the President of the United States.

the neutrals who were carrying them; and to seize and capture these outgoing cargoes as well as the incoming cargoes. This was called a 'presumption of enemy origin' or, more simply, a guess that the goods came from the enemy and could therefore be captured unless they were proved really to belong to neutrals.

Now, as an answer to the German magnetic mines, the same decision has been taken. When it is carried out it will prevent Germany from sending or selling abroad any goods that have to be carried by sea. So Germany will not be able to use abroad the money she would have got by selling those goods to other countries. The neutral countries, especially Holland, which have been the principal carriers of German goods since the war began, do not like this decision because it will unfortunately hamper their shipping and their trade. The Dutch Government, for instance, is said to have protested against the decision. But if Germany continues to lay unanchored mines, or to drop them into the sea from flying-boats, without caring whether they sink neutral vessels as well as British ships, neutral countries must expect to bear their share of the loss and inconvenience which the British answer to these German tricks bring upon them and others. The lot of the neutrals who are neighbours of Germany is certainly hard. They find themselves, literally, between the devil and the deep sea.

If the decision to stop Germany from selling her goods overseas is one of the most important things that has happened during the week, it is not the most important. I think that another decision taken by Britain and France last Friday is more important still. During the Great War of 1914-18 Britain and France were allied. But until nearly the end of that war they were not united. Their armies had separate Commanders, they bought what they needed in foreign countries separately, and sometimes bid against each other for war materials in foreign markets. If one of them lent money to the other it was looked upon as a commercial loan. After the war the two countries separated again and were not always very friendly to each other. But last Friday the British and French Governments decided that in future their two countries will act as one, that all their fighting forces, war materials and raw materials, oil, food, shipping and finance shall be treated as a joint or united concern.

Why is it so important that two countries like Britain and France, fighting side by side for the same cause—the defence of human freedom against German oppression, and the upholding of representative democratic forms of government against tyranny—should be united instead of being merely allied? The best answer to this question was given a few days ago by the leading newspaper in the United States of America. ‘It is natural,’ said this newspaper, ‘that the imagination should leap from this picture of unified war-time effort to a vision of peace-time federation that should serve as a starting point for a federation of Europe.’

Since the war began there has been much talk and more thought about the sort of Europe and the sort of world that will have to be formed when the war has been won. Much of this talk and thought has run in the direction of a union of free and democratic peoples for the preservation of their freedom, and with the object of putting an end to war itself. Everybody saw that this might be a splendid way out of the difficulties which had caused the League of Nations to fail, and that it might give the peoples of the world a chance to live better lives in peace without thought of fighting each other. The trouble was: Where and how to begin? Some said a beginning would have to be made after the war. Others said: ‘Begin now.’ ‘This is what Britain and France have done. By doing it they have not only strengthened themselves for the winning of the war but they have given hope to other peoples that the foundations of something better than a League of Nations may have been laid before the war is over.

I have been watching the effects of this Franco-British union upon Nazi Germany. It is all very well to talk, as Hitler talks, of making the German race the rulers over the whole of Europe and, indeed, of the world. Before he can do this he would have to beat Britain and France. It would be easier to beat them if they were divided, or could be divided. It is much harder to beat them when they are united. So I thought we should soon hear the German radio try to turn the French against the British, to tell the French that Germany really loves them, and to make them believe that they are the slaves and the victims of British ‘imperialist capitalism.’ Strange to say, this is exactly what has happened during the past week. It needs some impudence or, to put it bluntly, some ‘cheek,’ to tell the French that Germany loves

them and has never wanted to hurt them when Hitler's own book says again and again that no burden must be too heavy for Germany to bear, and no sacrifice too difficult, 'if its final result offers even the possibility of crushing our grimmest hater,' France. This he says on page 757 of *Mein Kampf* which he has compelled all Germans to buy and read. So it is not very likely that the French will be taken in by the love songs which Hitler's radio and Hitler's press are now singing to them.

But he is doing something more. Up to last August when he made his pact with Soviet Russia, Hitler was always denouncing Socialism and Bolshevism as the foulest and the wickedest things in the world, and was always describing himself and his Nazism as the only sure defence of civilization against them. Now his radio says to the French: 'The truth of the matter is that Germany is a Socialist country, and its capitalist enemies hate it. . . . The outlook of British capitalists in the face of world social evolution is one of the reasons for British aggression, but their calculations are wrong. . . . Our [German] responsibility in the present war is therefore not that of having settled old quarrels with the Czechs or Poles but that of being young, active, energetic and of having been the first to create new social conditions in order to fight for better social order.'

I think the French are too intelligent to heed this nonsense. The French Socialists, like the British Socialist Labour Party, are supporting the war against Nazi Germany with heart and soul because they know that German Nazism, or 'National Socialism,' means slavery, and that free institutions, under which every class can make its voice heard, are the only safeguard of social progress.

And the way in which Germany is 'settling old quarrels' with the Czechs and Poles is to turn the Poles out of their own country, and to shoot the Czech students of Prague University who dared to celebrate the former and future freedom of Czechoslovakia a few days ago. The execution of these brave boys has sent a thrill of horror throughout the world. Everywhere German policy is the same. By magnetic mines under the sea, or by the killing of free peoples, Hitler and Hitlerism show their true nature. And this is one reason why Britain and France must fight on until they have freed the world from so evil a thing.

THE WAR: EARLY PHASES

RUSSIA ATTACKS FINLAND

While this talk was being given, the prospect was darkened by the breakdown of negotiations between Russia and Finland, and by the likelihood of Russo-Finnish hostilities. On November 26 the Soviet Government alleged that Finnish artillery had fired on Russian territory, killing and wounding a number of Soviet soldiers. Though the Finnish Government informed Moscow that these statements were unfounded, and proposed reciprocal troop withdrawals from the Finnish-Russian border, the Soviet Government denounced, on November 28, its non-aggression pact with Finland, and on November 29 broke off diplomatic negotiations. On the morning of November 30 Russian bombers attacked the Finnish capital, Helsinki, and a number of other towns, causing hundreds of casualties, and the Finnish coastal batteries sank a Russian destroyer and severely damaged a cruiser. The United States, which had offered to mediate between Russia and Finland, was indignant at Russian aggression. In a formal statement President Roosevelt said: 'All peace-loving peoples, those nations that are still hoping for a continuance of relations throughout the world on the basis of law and order, will unanimously condemn this new resort to military force as the arbiter of international differences'; and declared that the people and government of Finland had won 'the respect and warm regard of the people and government of the United States.'

My talk on December 1 therefore dealt with the Russo-Finnish situation and said: 'To me personally and, I imagine, to a good many other people the attack came as a surprise. Nowhere—except in Finland and Scandinavia—will the surprise have been more unpleasant than in the United States. Russia refused a friendly offer of the United States to mediate between her and Finland, and flouted American feeling and advice. The ultimate effects of this conduct may be more important in the long run than even the Russian onslaught on Finland, deplorable and unwarranted though it be.'

After sketching the history of Finland and the character of her people, I asked:

What lies behind this attack by a great nation of more than

180,000,000 people upon a little nation of barely 4,000,000 people? The Russians say that as long as the Finnish frontier runs within a few miles of Leningrad (the former capital of Russia, where nearly one-quarter of Russian industry is situated) Finnish guns could at any moment bombard and destroy the city. They say also that unless Russia has a naval harbour at Hangö on the Gulf of Finland Russia cannot be safe against invasion from the north-east. Most people in Western Europe look upon these fears as absurd, because it would be out of the question for little Finland ever to attack Russia. But, say the Russians, Finland has in the past received help from Germany who, in the case of a German war against Russia, might have made use of Finland; and, now that Russia and Germany are in agreement, Russia pretends that Great Britain has been encouraging Finland to resist Russian demands.

All this strikes me as moonshine. The real reason for what Russia is doing must be sought elsewhere. Even before Hitler came into power he planned to take from Russia a great deal of territory so as to gain what he calls 'living space' for Germany. In particular he wanted to get control of the Baltic States on the north and of the Ukraine on the south. Part of Hitler's plan was to persuade or to compel Poland and Roumania to help him in a campaign against Russia. But when Poland refused to take part in this plan and, feeling herself threatened by Germany, made an alliance with Great Britain and France last spring, Hitler turned round and made an agreement with Russia to carve up Poland. For this agreement Russia demanded a heavy price. Hitler had to give up to her the Baltic States of Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as the eastern part of Poland and the Polish Ukraine. In this way, Russia blocked Hitler's path and upset his plan. Then, to make quite sure that neither Germany nor any other country could attack Russia from the north-east, Russia pressed Finland to give up Finnish territory near Leningrad and to hand over the naval harbour of Hangö. Finland resisted this pressure and may, perhaps, have expected that Germany would give her some support. Instead, Germany advised Finland to yield, and showed no interest at all in her fate. So it looks as though the control of Finland must have been another part of the price which Hitler paid for his agreement with Russia.

What can Hitler have got in return for allowing Russia to upset his plans in this way? Some think that besides promising to supply Germany with amounts of oil, wheat and raw materials, Russia may have agreed to let Hitler try his hand at searching the Balkans for the raw materials he needs. This may not be a very hopeful prospect for Germany. I, for one, should be surprised if Russia were to let Germany get hold of or approach or control any part of the Black Sea coast; and up to now the Balkan countries have not been very happy about the results of their trade with Germany. They prefer to be paid for their goods and produce in sound money rather than through barter arrangements that do not always work well. Great Britain is bound to keep an eye on what happens in the Balkans, for many reasons. One of them is that Roumania, like Greece, is a country which Great Britain has promised to help if it is attacked.

One thing we know: Hitler is getting anxious about the supplies of petrol and oil for the German Army, and food for the German people. The Franco-British blockade at sea is growing tighter and tighter; and German submarines have not, on the whole, been very successful in their attempts to sink ships trading with Great Britain. American observers reckon that the British and French navies have already sunk forty-three German submarines. This would mean that not only have that number of U-boats been lost but that their crews have been either drowned or captured—and submarine crews take many months to train. At the same time, every encounter between British and French aircraft, on the one hand, and German aircraft, on the other, has proved that the British and the French airmen and their machines are superior to the German airmen and the German machines. So, altogether, Hitler may be feeling the pinch. This is no doubt why he began to scatter mines in the sea indiscriminately ten days or a fortnight ago. These :
a good deal of damage to British and especially shipping. We have not heard the past week. It is supposed scattered in the sea by Germany. But early this week a squadron over the North Sea to the German. These mine-laying seaplanes stationed damaged five of these seaplanes.

likely to scatter mines again for some time to come. What is more, all the British planes returned safely though they were shot at by the German gunners.

This does not mean that German mines, and perhaps now German submarines, will not give us a good deal of trouble in future. It does mean that every fresh German attempt of this kind will sooner or later be thwarted and heavily punished. Meanwhile, the French and British arrangements for stopping and seizing all the goods that Germany may try to export through neutral countries in neutral ships have been completed and will come into force next week. They could have been put into force at once if Great Britain and France had not wished to disturb neutral shipping as little as possible. So time has been allowed for neutral shippers and merchants to select their cargoes, and to tell the British and French naval authorities in advance what the cargoes are. If there are no German goods among them, or only neutral goods containing less than one-quarter of materials bought from Germany, they will be allowed to pass. But if they contain goods which are entirely or mainly of German origin or manufacture they will be seized.

Most of the European neutral governments have, naturally, made an outcry against these arrangements. Japan is said to have declared that she cannot recognize them because they would interfere too seriously with her trade. The United States, on the other hand, finds them reasonable and will do nothing to favour Germany. Indeed, an important, perhaps the most important, event of the past week has been the growing firmness of American policy towards the European conflict. . . .

War is a terrible melting-pot. Nobody can tell what may not be thrown into it. But one thing is sure: the British and the French democracies will fight on till they have destroyed the evil thing which Hitlerism represents, no matter what support Hitlerism may receive from other quarters. Neither the loss of brave men like the captain and the crew of the British merchant cruiser, *Rawalpindi*—which went down with flying colours in the North Sea this week after a gallant fight against powerful German warships—nor the operations of German U-boats or the scattering of German mines will shake our determination to see the thing through to a victorious end.

THE WAR: EARLY PHASES

MORE 'PEACE OFFERS'

Events in Finland were again the main theme of my talk on December 8. I said that the Russian threat to Scandinavia was felt to be nearly as serious a matter as the Russian attack upon Finland; and I suggested that some attention must be paid to Russian distrust of German designs in the Balkans. A Russian official organ had, I noted, given Roumania advice that sounded rather like a threat; and that though Germany was trying to make Roumania supply oil and food for the German Army, and German pressure had brought about a change of government at Bucharest, I should be surprised if Russia were willing to let Germany approach or control any part of the Roumanian Black Sea coast. If, as Russia appeared to desire, a Russo-Roumanian 'treaty of mutual assistance' should be concluded like those between Russia and the Baltic States, it might mean that Roumanian independence would vanish, and that Germany would have little chance of getting oil and food from Roumania unless Russia wished Germany to get it. Italy, too, had become excited both about Finland and the Balkans. So the international outlook was becoming very complicated. I continued:

Now Great Britain has promised to help Roumania if she should be attacked. France and Great Britain have also an agreement with Turkey. The same Russian official journal which advises or warns Roumania also advises Turkey not to hold fast to Great Britain and France or to allow the war to spread into the Balkans. This means that Turkey is advised or warned to link up with Russia, and to give up her agreements or alliances with Roumania and the other Balkan countries. There is no reason to think that Turkey, much though she wishes to be at peace with Russia, will follow this advice or be frightened by the warning.

But if Turkey has an interest in seeing that Roumania and the Balkan peninsula do not come under the heel either of Russia or of Germany, the interest of Italy in the Balkans is quite as great. Yugoslavia, the strongest Balkan country, is Italy's neighbour. Only last spring Italy invaded and took possession of Albania, a Balkan kingdom which lies between Yugoslavia and Greece. If Roumania and the Balkans were

to come under Russian or German control Italy might feel very uncomfortable. So Italy may think that Russia will be less likely to make war on Roumania or seriously to threaten the Balkans if Finland proves to be a harder nut to crack than Russia expected. On this supposition, which is only a supposition, it might be easier to understand the Italian excitement about Finland.

The trouble about the potful of problems which this war has raised is that we do not know the precise terms of most of them. We can only guess. We do not know, for example, exactly what bargain has been made between Germany and Russia. A good many Germans, including the head of the German Navy, are believed to dislike the part of the bargain between Stalin and Hitler that allowed Stalin to get control of the Baltic States and to attack Finland. Other Germans may not like to see Russia holding the Ukraine and able, if it suits Stalin, to make Hungary uneasy. But the bargain is there. What has Germany got out of it except the splitting up of Poland between herself and Russia? And what can she hope to get out of it?

Russia may be willing for Germany to get what food and goods she can out of the Balkan countries; though, as I said last week, these countries prefer to be paid in sound money for what they supply, not by barter arrangements that do not always work well. If a deep-laid plan does exist between Germany and Russia, we have not yet seen much proof of it. Both Turkey and Italy may believe in the existence of such a plan; and this may be why Turkish newspapers are now calling upon all the Balkan States to stand together if one of them should be attacked.

Meanwhile, in the West, things have not been going well for Germany. In this last week no fewer than five German submarines have been sunk or captured, and every fight between British and German aircraft has ended unfavourably for the Germans. Some British and more neutral merchant ships have been sunk by German mines or torpedoes, but several of the few German merchant ships that still remain on the high seas have either been captured by British war-ships or sunk by their own crews. As Mr. Winston Churchill put it in his careful statement to the House of Commons on Wednesday: 'We are buffeted by the waves, but the ocean tides flow steady and strong in our favour.'

It is the neutral countries, like Holland, that are feeling most severely the pinch of German warfare on shipping. Not only are their vessels being sunk without warning but they themselves are being told by Germany that unless they take action against the British and French blockade Germany will no longer look upon them as really neutral. To these threats Holland has made a firm and dignified reply. It is not easy to frighten the Dutch. They are a very sturdy people whom we British have good reason to respect. We are sorry that we have to interfere with their trade because we know they are doing all they can to be really neutral. And if Germany should attack them I, for one, think that we should look upon the Dutch cause as our own.

It is natural that most of the neutrals should hope that the war may soon come to an end. Hints have been dropped that a conference of belligerent and of neutral governments might perhaps find the way to a peaceful settlement. The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, dealt with these hints last Tuesday in the House of Lords. Some of his words are worth quoting because they say what we all feel. He said that unless the German Government were willing to accept terms which would correspond to the purposes for which we took up arms, and unless there were security that any settlement reached by a conference would be respected, no conference could achieve anything, nor could it prevent the leaders of Germany from making their people think that, on the whole, the method of force had not worked too badly. And Lord Halifax defined in these words the purposes for which we took up arms:

‘We desire that peoples who have been deprived of their independence should recover their liberties. We desire to redeem the peoples of Europe from the constant fear of German aggression. We desire to safeguard our own freedom and security. We do not seek aggrandizement, nor to re-draw the map in our own interests. . . . If Germany is able to restore the confidence which she has destroyed, we aim at a settlement which will encourage her to take her rightful place in Europe, and we wish to create an international order in which all peoples, as we hope, secure under the reign of law, can determine their political and economic life free from the interference of their more powerful neighbours.’

Lord Halifax ended by saying, with what I believe to be complete truth, that it is just because our people have come

to see how impossible life was under the conditions created by the present rulers of Germany that their passionate desire for peace harmonizes with their deep determination to see this struggle through until the purposes for which we took up arms have been attained.

BRITISH 'FOOLS'; AND THE 'GRAF SPEE'

By December 15 other matters had come into the foreground. Several of them illustrated the spirit in which British sailors and airmen were fighting the war. I said I believed that this spirit, these 'airy nothings,' were more important than the advantages Germany might obtain by brutality and lawlessness. I went on:

The only thing that could, in any way, reduce the moral difference between the Franco-British cause and the lawlessness of Nazi Germany would be for the Western Allies to allow themselves to be provoked into acting lawlessly in their turn.

The Western Allies are fighting for freedom and for a victory that shall make law supreme in the affairs of nations. If they were to fall into lawlessness, even for the sake of military advantage, their championship of freedom and of law would be tarnished. It may be hard to remember this truth in the heat of conflict with a ruthless foe. The more creditable is it that Allied commanders and fighting men do remember it.

A German officer captured in the war of 1914-18 said to a British officer: 'You British will always be fools, and we shall never be gentlemen.' The other day a British submarine commander reported that the big German liner *Bremen* (which escaped from New York early in this war and has since been dodging the British warships that were trying to capture it) had passed within torpedo range of his submarine but that he had refrained from sinking it without warning. Some people in England, and some British newspapers, thought him a fool for allowing the *Bremen* to escape. They said he ought to have sent the German liner to the bottom even if he had left the crew of the *Bremen* to drown. A former naval officer who is now a member of the House of Lords silenced these people and these newspapers by saying that the sub-

marine commander had done right. 'We are fighting this war to uphold international law,' he added. 'International law is that a merchant ship can be attacked only for persistent refusal to stop when challenged or for firing back if she is armed.' Next day the submarine commander who had spared the *Bremen* reported that he had sunk a German U-boat and had torpedoed a German cruiser. This he was entitled to do by the laws of war; and though we should all have liked the *Bremen* to be captured or sunk, we are rather proud of him for not having broken the laws of war.

If we shall always be 'fools,' as the German officer said, there is a spirit in our folly that we should be sorry to lose. Last week the King went to the front and spent several days among his troops. While he was there the French Commander-in-Chief decorated an English sergeant-airman for having been a gentleman. The aeroplane which this sergeant piloted was hit over the German lines by a shell. To avoid capture the airman turned towards the French lines but soon found that his machine was on fire. He might have saved himself easily by using his parachute at a great height. Had he done so, his blazing machine would have fallen into a French village and might have done much damage. So he piloted it in flames until it was clear of the village and had fallen to within 300 feet of the ground. Then he jumped and, fortunately, landed safely while his machine crashed harmlessly in a field. For risking his own life in order to spare the village the French Commander-in-Chief decorated him. He had proved himself a gentleman.

The most thrilling news of the week is that of the sea fight between one of the powerful German 'pocket' battleships, *Admiral Graf Spee*, and three smaller British cruisers off the coast of Uruguay in South America. The German vessel—named after Admiral Count Spee who was killed and his squadron destroyed by British warships in the battle of the Falkland Islands early in the last war—carried six 11-inch guns whereas the British cruisers carried only 8-inch and 6-inch guns which the heavy German guns outranged by more than two miles. The largest of the British cruisers was hit and damaged. The others, still smaller vessels, kept up the fight until they drove the German vessel, hard hit, with her gun turrets shot through and holes in her side, into Montevideo harbour. She cannot stay there long without

being dismantled. If she comes out she will be likely to get a warm reception. Meanwhile she is out of action, and another of the most dangerous German warships has been driven off the high seas.

I remember the *Admiral Graf Spee* well. She represented the German Navy at the Coronation Naval Review in 1937. When she fired a salute the sharp crack of her 11-inch guns could be heard above the noise made by all the other guns together. In putting her out of action the gunners of the British cruisers must have done some very smart work.

News of this fight came on the same day as accounts of the plucky Finnish resistance to the Russian attempt to cut Finland in half by forcing a way through the narrowest part of the country. Again and again the Finns have beaten off attacks by Russian forces that are immensely superior in numbers. If they can only get enough ammunition and aircraft and artillery in time, the Finns may yet make the Russians regret ever having attempted to crush Finland by force. For one thing, the Russian Red Army has been shown to be a less formidable fighting machine than many observers thought it. The Russian soldiers are poorly clad, badly fed, and without adequate hospital or medical services. Hundreds of them have been frozen to death. In time, the Russian Red Army could, if Finland be not helped, overcome Finnish resistance by weight of numbers; and this raises a very anxious question for the neighbours of Finland—Sweden and Norway.

Finland has appealed for help to the Western world. She has also appealed to the League of Nations. The League Assembly, which met at Geneva last Monday and elected a Norwegian delegate as its President, condemned Russia's action against Finland, and called upon members of the League to give Finland such material and humanitarian help as is within their power. It declared also that Russia has not only failed in her engagements but has placed herself outside the Covenant.

This was done after Russia had scornfully rejected an appeal from the League Council to stop the fighting, and to accept the mediation of the League. A strong demand was then made by the Argentine Republic for the expulsion of Russia from the League. This demand was supported by Great Britain, and was accepted by the League Council.

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So Russia has been turned out of the League. Some people may argue that it matters little what the League does or fails to do, because, they say, the League has lost the authority it might have had if it had always condemned other acts of aggression. I do not share this view. As I said last week I think it is a good thing that the League should have met and should have expressed the abhorrence of the civilized world for what Russia—while still one of its members—has done. The League would have perished ingloriously if it had continued to remain indifferent to flagrant violations of its Covenant which, after all, is as solemn an international treaty as was ever signed. Besides, the Assembly resolution gives international sanction to whatever the Western Powers and the neutrals may do to help Finland. Great Britain is helping her. The practical question is whether Finland can be helped soon enough and in such measure as to save her from being crushed. . . .

For the moment one factor rules, and is likely to rule, everything. This is the growing unity between Great Britain and France. British troops now hold a considerable section of the French front line. Some of them are under French command. They had their first brush with the enemy this week; and, according to French accounts, the enemy withdrew—much the worse for wear. The British and French Governments have also pooled their financial resources and have agreed that the pooling shall last beyond the end of the war. This arrangement is the more warmly welcomed because the conviction is growing in Great Britain and, I believe, in many neutral countries as well, that nothing short of some form of political and economic union will be able to set Europe on her feet again when Nazi Germany has been beaten. It is even argued that a political and economic union of European States for the maintenance and development of peace is provided for by Article 21 of the League Covenant, and would therefore strengthen the League.

These matters may seem remote at a time when we and the French are fighting to save civilization from Nazi barbarism. But I happen to know that in many countries, and even among Germans who loathe Nazi tyranny, these remote matters are being deeply thought about. Our foremost task is, of course, to win the war, and not to accept any patched-up peace. One thing we know: there can be no peace with

WORDS ON THE AIR

Nazi Germany, or with Hitler or Hitlerism, for they deny the right of decent people and decent nations to live free and law-abiding lives. They respect no rules of national or international behaviour, either in the letter or in the spirit. They may think us fools for believing that decent life can only be lived, and that even war should be fought, according to the spirit of the rules. But such 'folly' seems to us the very essence of civilization. And however 'foolish' we may be in this matter, it does not mean that we shall 'always be fools' when it comes to the making of peace.

My talk on December 22 was devoted entirely to Franco-British relations in the light of the persistent efforts of German propaganda to drive a wedge between Great Britain and France. Early in December the French Prime Minister had felt it necessary to remind his people that the brunt of the fighting in Western Europe since the war began had been borne by the British whose losses, even in men and without reckoning ships and material, had been heavier than those of France. I analysed French feeling as I had known it in the war of 1914-18, and alluded to the Nazi spokesmen who were now urging Frenchmen not to trouble about the denunciations of France in Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, but to understand that all Hitler had said against France could easily be changed if France were reasonable and would co-operate with Germany. The permanent fact, said these Nazi spokesmen, was that England had always plotted against Germany and was Germany's 'Enemy No. 1.'

Then I gave some account of the French people and the French Army as I knew them, and expressed my belief—which turned out to be mistaken—that German intrigues and German propaganda could not succeed in undermining the French determination to see the war through to its only conceivable end in the total overthrow of Hitler and Hitlerism. As I knew that my talks were being followed by large numbers of French listeners, I hoped that this spoken essay on France might help to counteract German blandishments. Letters from friends in France appeared to justify this hope, though they also revealed the intensity and the persistence of the efforts which German agencies were making to foment French distrust of British fidelity.

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RETROSPECT

On December 29, in my last talk before the New Year, I tried to interpret the feelings of our people about the war at the end of its first four months, and to glance back over the year as a whole. I said:

Whatever may be said of the year that is nearly gone, one thing is sure—it will long be remembered. We are still too near to its events for anybody to be able to pick out one rather than another as the most important of them. It may be argued that March 15, when Hitler destroyed Czechoslovakia and convinced Great Britain and France that his pledged word is worth exactly nothing, was the turning-point of the year. Or it may be claimed that August 22 was the real climax, for on that day Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, who had vilified each other for years, signed an agreement of which the full meaning is not yet known. Among other things it provided for the carving up of Poland, for Russian control of the Baltic States and, probably, of Finland. Or Hitler's attack on Poland in the early hours of September 1, or the British and French declarations of war against Germany on September 3, may be thought the really outstanding events and days of 1939.

In a way I should agree with all of them. Where I might differ would be in not taking any particular event as having, in itself, lent a special character and meaning to 1939. My own opinion, for what it may be worth, is that 1939 will long be looked upon as the year when one high-spirited, though comparatively weak, nation decided to fight against overwhelming odds rather than surrender to threats, and when two other great and strong nations made up their minds that everything which makes life tolerable would be lost if they should not, in their turn, stand up against what the Prime Minister of one of them called 'the evil things'—'brute force, bad faith, injustice, oppression and persecution.' In other words, I think 1939 will hold its place in human history as the year when the great war began for and against the essentials of what we call 'civilization.'

In this belief I am strengthened by several things that have happened during the past week. Some of them are military, some are political with a strong moral background, and some

are religious. Among the military things are the arrival in England of the first squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force, ready for active service; and the arrival in France of units of the Indian Army composed mainly if not entirely of men of Islamic faith. In England the Australians found a welcome as hearty as that given to the Canadian contingent which had preceded them by a few days. No power on earth could have compelled these men—Canadians, Australians and Indian Muslims—to come to Europe and to fight for a cause which, in their several ways, they feel to be their own, if they had not wished to come. It is not only a matter of loyalty to the King of Canada or the King of Australia or the Emperor of India. It is proof that the moral ties that bind together the peoples of the British Commonwealth of Nations are never stronger than when the rightfulness of their free ways of life is challenged or denied by those who spurn freedom and believe only in domination by force.

It was faith in the superior power of the ways of freedom that made the King's broadcast to his peoples on Christmas Day so notable an utterance—notable both in itself and because of the response it has called forth from many parts of the world. France, for example, felt that the King spoke for her and to her as much as for and to the citizens of the British Commonwealth. I can remember a time when the deeply religious note in the King's words would not have awakened a responsive echo in France. The fact that it should have done so I take to be a sign that, like ourselves, the French feel that this struggle against 'the evil things' compels everybody to make up his or her mind upon what is evil and what is good, and to hold fast to the good, come what may.

Shortly before the King spoke, two very eminent neutrals had spoken also—the President of the United States and Pope Pius XII. On December 23 President Roosevelt summoned the Protestant and the Jewish Churches in the United States to confer with him, and informed the Pope that it would give the President great satisfaction to send a personal representative to the Vatican 'in order that our parallel endeavours for peace and the alleviation of suffering may be assisted.' So the President will send to Rome the head of the International Refugee Organization in the United States to consult the head of the Roman Catholic Church upon 'ques-

tions arising out of the abnormal world situation,' while at home he confers with the leaders of the American Protestant and Jewish Churches.

The spirit in which the Pope himself will have received the President's announcement may be judged from the reply His Holiness gave to the Christmas address from the College of Cardinals. He told the Cardinals 'with joy' of the President's action, and deplored the strife that had, as he said, been brought about by a series of acts 'irreconcilable with the prescriptions of international law and the most elementary sentiments of humanity.' Recognizing that no peace can flow from such acts, the Pope nevertheless thought it right to lay down the fundamental points of a just and lasting peace to be put forward by 'responsible and level-headed men, . . . whenever the opportunity should offer, with the requisite guarantees and securities.'

The points were five in number. Unless I am greatly mistaken, nobody in the British Commonwealth or in France disagrees with any of them—another proof, if proof were needed, how widespread is agreement upon those essentials of civilization for which we are fighting.

Were I to express a purely personal view I should say that none of the Pope's five points shows more practical wisdom than his fourth which dealt with what he called 'the true needs and just demands of the nations and peoples, and of the ethnical minorities.' Anybody who has had, as I have had, experience of the extraordinary difficulty of dealing fairly with the racial minorities that may live inside a state or nation of which the majority belongs to another race, will feel how sound was the Pope's comment upon the 'true needs and just demands' of such minorities. He said: 'Such demands may not be strong enough to establish a strict right, but may deserve friendly examination, so that they may be met in a peaceful manner and, if necessary, by a fair, wise and agreed revision of the treaties.'

Let me say why I think this fourth point sound and wise. To clamour and to agitate for the strict right of a racial minority to have its demands fulfilled is fatally easy and is often harmful to the minority itself. After all, minorities owe something to the majorities in whose midst they live. The more the demands of minorities are put forward as a 'strict right,' the stronger becomes the temptation for a majority to

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reject them absolutely. But if it be admitted that minority demands 'may not be strong enough to establish a strict right,' they are more likely to be given 'friendly examination' and to be treated in a spirit of tolerant give and take which is the very method of freedom.

The Pope's fifth point said: 'Rulers of the peoples, and the peoples themselves, must become imbued with that spirit of moral justice which can alone breathe life into the dead letter of international instruments.' Here, I think, His Holiness the Pope put his finger on what is really at stake in this war. If the Western democracies—and among them I include the peoples of the British Commonwealth—were not upholding in arms the 'spirit of moral justice' against the immoral spirit of unjust domination and brute force, their cause would differ only in degree, not in its nature and purpose, from the cause or, rather, the ambitions of their foes. And it is precisely for the reason that the cause of the Western Allies does thus differ from the purpose of its enemies that the war which began in September 1939 is a fight for the essentials of civilization.

When we look back over the year that is nearly gone, and confess that none of us can tell what 1940 may hold in store for us, one thing stands out—at any rate in my memory—as the most surprising and, on the whole, the most satisfactory event of the past twelvemonth. This was the feeling of liberation which came over the vast majority of our people on Sunday, September 3, when they learned that war had been declared against Germany. It may seem a paradox that a people like ours, loving peace and hating war, should have been almost glad to know that it was going to fight, and to risk its all, for something really worth while. The explanation of the paradox is that a nightmare had been lifted, the nightmare of trying to come to terms with what we knew to be evil; and the gladness we felt was that we, as a nation and as a Commonwealth, should be battling for the right of men to call their souls their own. The poisonous vapours of 'defeatism' were dispelled. We did not then pause to think that we owed this chance of delivering ourselves and others from the 'evil things' to the resolve of Poland not to hang her head under the German sentence of death. To the Poles, now downtrodden and tortured, we owe more than a debt of honour, as, indeed, to the Czechoslovaks whose spirit is

also unbroken and whose National Committee our Government has now recognized. No less a debt do we owe to Finland who is devotedly withstanding the hosts of Soviet Russia. So I think that whatever 'good hap and sorrow' the future may hold for us, 1939 will always mark the beginning of a war of deliverance from evil.

1940

My first talk in 1940 speaks for itself. Severe earthquakes, followed by fire and floods, and then by heavy snow and frost, inflicted on the Turkish people worse suffering than even war might have brought upon them. Great Britain and France, like the smaller neighbours of Turkey, were giving what help they could. But neither sympathy nor help had been offered by Germany or Russia. Then I said:

In some quarters, indeed, cynical minds are speculating upon the effects of Turkey's misfortunes on the military and political outlook. Such speculations strike me as being no less premature than they are repugnant to whatever decent human feeling remains in the world. Besides, Russia has quite enough to do at the moment on her north-eastern border where the epic gallantry of the Finns against superior Russian forces has hitherto been crowned—as valour is not always crowned—with success. Russian losses have been frightful—comparable, indeed, to those which the Russian armies endured in their winter campaign amid the Balkan snows against the Ottoman Empire in 1877. Stalin is reported to have ordered that neither men nor material shall be spared in the effort to crush Finland swiftly. He is reported also to have asked for the help of the German officers who, in 1918, fought on the side of the Finns under Field-Marshal Mannerheim against the Russian Red Army. These officers are said to be reluctant now to change sides; but if Hitler orders them to go they will probably go. Hitler is, in fact, beginning to show his hand in regard to Finland, and a very sinister hand it may turn out to be.

With such knowledge of the prospects as an entirely unofficial observer can gain, I will try to explain things as I—rightly or wrongly—see them. There is to be an extraordinary

session of the Swedish Parliament early next week. Last Monday the Swedish Foreign Minister, in a New Year broadcast to the nation, declared that all Swedes realized the possibility of a threat against their life as a free people, their future, and even their past. 'It would be foolish (he continued) for us to close our eyes to dangers which confront us. It is better to ask if we have a clear right to pursue our life as a free nation according to our own laws. Over the whole world lies a shadow, as if all nations were dominated by a newly discovered and inexorable law under which the mere existence of large nations robs small nations of their right to exist. Fortunately, Finland is busy awakening the world out of this haunting nightmare of soulless political arithmetic. We have the right to keep our country for ourselves and to determine our own future. We have also the unanimous and indomitable will to defend what is and shall be ours. Where there exists this conviction and this will, there is no room for anxiety or fear.'

On the same day the Prime Minister of another Scandinavian country, Denmark, spoke in a very different tone. 'I am personally more depressed than I have ever been before' he said. He hoped that there was still a sufficient sense of justice in the world to ensure that Denmark, 'Europe's oldest nation,' which never threatened other countries, would be left alone. If the Danish Prime Minister had been expecting Germany to occupy his country at any moment he could hardly have spoken more despondently.

The Prime Minister of Finland, who spoke on the same day, was in better heart. He thanked Sweden for helping Finland, and for the arrival of Swedish volunteers. But he added: 'In time, if we are left to our own resources, our task will naturally exceed our powers. Against endless resources of men and material we shall be able to oppose only our same thinning battalions, with the same limited munitions; but we know in our hearts that the civilized nations are with us and soon that their hands will also be helping us. . . . What has happened up to now gives us complete assurance that help will come on a large enough scale and in time.'

Can Finland hold out till enough help comes? A leading citizen of Helsinki, the Finnish capital, has recorded his belief that the Finns would not yield even should the weight of Russia overwhelm them. The whole civilian population

would retreat into Sweden, covered by the fighting forces as a rearguard. In theory, he said, Sweden, as a neutral, ought then to disarm the Finnish Army. In practice Sweden could not do this. She herself would be in danger and could hardly remain neutral. Could Sweden then ask the tired and battered remnants of the Finnish Army to renew a fight which Sweden had left Finland to wage alone? Sweden, he thought, cannot afford to let events reach such a desperate pass. She will have to side actively with Finland.

This, I imagine, is the very question which the Swedish Parliament will consider early next week. Meanwhile German submarines have been sinking Swedish merchant vessels; and several warnings are reported to have reached Sweden from Germany that if Sweden and Norway give active help to Finland, or allow munitions, supplies or reinforcements to pass through Norwegian or Swedish territory on the way to Finland, Germany will look upon both countries as being no longer neutral and will act accordingly.

I think—I must be careful not to say ‘I know’—that an attack upon Sweden has been carefully considered by the leading quarters of Nazi Germany for some time past. Its possible advantages have been weighed against its disadvantages. In German eyes one advantage of a successful invasion of Sweden would be to prevent that country from being dominated or overrun by Russia if Russia should succeed in breaking Finnish resistance. Another advantage would be to gain for Germany possession of the rich Swedish iron mines, especially those within the Arctic Circle. A disadvantage—the prospect of which has hitherto made Germany pause—is that the Scandinavian countries and other neutral states might link up more closely with Great Britain and France, and that the United States might help them even more than it is already helping Finland. Nobody can say when or whether Hitler will think that the advantages of attacking Sweden outweigh the disadvantages; but the strong probability that ways and means of occupying Scandinavia, including Denmark, have been considered in Germany is enough to account for the depression of the Danish Prime Minister and for the grave tone of the Swedish Foreign Minister’s words on New Year’s Day.

There are other elements in the situation to which I can only allude. One of them is that co-operation between Ger-

many and Russia seems likely to grow closer in several directions. Another is that Great Britain and France have informed the League of Nations that they are taking steps to give substantial help to Finland in accordance with the League's decisions. The nature and the extent of this help is, of course, secret. But I myself feel sure that if Hitler should carry out his threat to treat Norway and Sweden as unneutral because they, too, were doing their duty as members of the League, Great Britain and France could not and would not remain indifferent.

So the Scandinavian problem is beginning to loom very large. It would be wrong, I believe, to look upon it as a problem that has arisen solely on account of the Russian attack upon Finland. Records of conversations with Hitler in 1933 and 1934 have recently been published in England by the former President of the Danzig Senate. In one of these conversations Hitler declared that the day of small states is past, and that he would form both a Western Union of Holland, Flanders and Northern France under German control, and a Northern Union of Denmark, Sweden and Norway. In another conversation he declared that the Northern States belonged to Germany quite as much as did Holland and Belgium. In the next war, he added, one of his first measures must be to occupy Sweden. He could not leave the Scandinavian countries to fall either under British or Russian influence.

The President of the Danzig Senate pointed out to Hitler that the military subjugation of the Scandinavian Peninsula must entail a disproportionate strain on German resources. Hitler replied that it was not a question of occupying the entire country, but only the more important harbours and industrial centres, above all the iron mines. He went on, textually: 'It will be a daring but interesting undertaking, never before attempted in the history of the world. Protected by the fleet, and with the co-operation of the air force, I shall order a series of unexpected individual exploits. The Swedes will nowhere be prepared to put up a sufficiently strong defence. But even if one or the other of these exploits should fail, the overwhelming majority of strategic points will be held.' Hitler was convinced that these operations would lead to the permanent incorporation of the Northern States in the Greater German system of alliances; and he concluded,

significantly: 'I shall in every way make it easy for them, more especially by declaring that I have no hostile intentions. I should tell them that I did not wish to conquer them but wanted only an alliance that was entirely natural and would certainly be openly desired by Sweden if she were not, out of fear of Russia and Britain, withdrawing into a perfectly suicidal neutrality. I should explain that I came to protect them, and so to give the friendly elements in the country the opportunity of deciding according to their own free will.'

If these were Hitler's plans in 1934, it is reasonable to suppose that they are now very much in his mind. During the past few weeks German wireless propaganda has been steadily trying to foster Swedish sympathies for Germany and to warn the Swedes against the designs of Great Britain and France. Swedish journals that have criticized Germany have been violently denounced. What effect, if any, this propaganda has had upon the Swedes I cannot judge. Nor can I say whether Hitler really means now to carry out the plans he outlined five or six years ago. But from what I know of Sweden I should imagine that her Foreign Minister spoke for the great majority of her people when he said on New Year's Day that they have 'the unanimous and indomitable will to defend what is and shall be theirs.'

And Hitler may still pause if he reads that statement in the light of the following passage from President Roosevelt's address to the Congress and the people of the United States last Wednesday: 'Americans,' said the President, 'must look ahead to the possibilities for their children if the world came to be dominated by concentrated force alone; if small nations lost their independence, to become mere appendages of vast and powerful military systems; if a large part of the rest of the world were compelled to worship the god imposed by a military ruler or were forbidden to worship God at all—if they were forbidden to read and hear the facts and were deprived of the truth that makes men free; and if world trade were controlled by any nation or group of nations setting up that control through military force.'

If President Roosevelt had spoken with Finland and Scandinavia in mind he could hardly have spoken differently. Hitler may or may not heed his words. In any event the true character of this war as a world-wide fight for human freedom grows clearer week by week.

WORDS ON THE AIR

A DISJOINTED STORY

The story I tried to tell on January 12, 1940, was, as I said, 'more like a crazy news-reel than anything else I can think of.' If one took only the news that had been published, the result would be disjointed enough, but any attempt to guess what might lie behind the news, to pick out what was true and to avoid what might be 'propaganda,' might result in complete muddle. So I told the story as best I could, beginning with a meeting between the Foreign Ministers of Italy and Hungary, Count Ciano and Count Csáky, at Venice where they were said to have reached 'complete agreement.' I went on:

What the agreement was about we don't yet know. If they had fallen out we might also have heard of their 'complete agreement,' just as we did in May last year when Count Ciano met Herr von Ribbentrop at Salzburg, and afterwards saw Hitler at Berchtesgaden in order to arrange the Italo-German alliance. Since then we have been told by Count Ciano himself that the 'complete agreement' left room for several misunderstandings, one of which was about the degree of 'consultation' between Italy and Germany in case Germany should go to war. According to the same Count Ciano it was agreed that both Italy and Germany would need three or four years before either of them was ready for war. And though something was said about German relations with Russia, the Italian Foreign Minister got no hint that within a few months Hitler would be embracing Stalin whom he had often denounced as 'the scum of the earth.' What Count Ciano did get was a telephone call from Herr von Ribbentrop on August 22 last year to say that the German Foreign Secretary was about to fly to Moscow to sign a 'non-aggression pact' with Russia. This kind of 'consultation' struck Count Ciano, and his father-in-law, Mussolini, as a little meagre.

As we now know, the Russo-German 'non-aggression' pact which Herr von Ribbentrop signed at Moscow provided for the carving up of Poland between Russia and Germany, for the Russian occupation of Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania and, apparently, for a Russian subjugation of Finland. Italy was not consulted at all about these things. When she saw that Russia was not only mopping up Esthonia, Latvia and

Lithuania but was taking the greater part of what had been the Polish Ukraine on the south, and was looking over the Carpathian mountains on to the Hungarian plain, Italy wondered where this Russian advance was going to stop, and what would happen to the very friendly arrangements she had formerly made with Hungary. Had Germany agreed to this Russian push in the direction of South-Eastern Europe and, perhaps, of the Balkans where Italy was particularly interested? Even in Germany many people were worried. They wondered whether Stalin had not got the better of Hitler and of Herr von Ribbentrop in the bargain signed at Moscow. For not only had Stalin put into his pocket the little states on the southern shore of the Baltic Sea where German influence had always been strong, but he looked like blocking the German road to the Roumanian oil fields and the Black Sea coast if, indeed, he did not mean to get control of the Balkans and to give Hungary a Hobson's choice between absorption by Germany and submission to Russia.

No wonder many Germans were worried. Hitler may have been worried, too. But he could not very well quarrel with Stalin because he hoped to get from Russia food, oil and raw materials which the British blockade was preventing him from getting elsewhere. Russia was on top, and Hitler had to sing small.

Then, in November, Stalin began to bully Finland. He may have thought the Finns would yield, as Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania had yielded. They did not yield. So Stalin sent aeroplanes to bomb, and armies to crush them. Those armies caught a tartar. The Finns put up a fight that has stirred the imagination and won the admiration of the world. They have played havoc with Stalin's armies. The only question is how long they can do it if they do not get enough help in men, as well as in raw material and money, from the countries which sympathize with them.

It is natural that Sweden, Norway and Denmark should sympathize with and should help them. The King of Sweden recognized Sweden's obligation to give all the help that she can when he opened the Swedish Parliament on Thursday. It is natural, too, that Great Britain and France—as Mr. Neville Chamberlain said on Wednesday—should 'give sympathy and aid which will be no mere formality.' But it seemed odd that Italy, Germany's ally, should be among the

supporters of Finland. Yet this is what has happened. While it was happening the Italian press, officially controlled, overflowed with abuse of Russia—abuse which Russia is now returning with interest.

Nobody could quite tell what lay, or lies, behind this Italian outburst. Last Monday we heard that Germany had held up a consignment of Italian war material destined for Finland, that the Italian Consul-General in Berlin had protested against this German meddling, and that Germany had answered that 'as a neutral' she could not let help go through her territory to the enemies of Russia. The Italian consignment for Finland is to be sent back to Italy. This looks as though Germany wants Russia to conquer Finland, or at any rate, as though Hitler were still afraid of irritating Stalin.

There may be other explanations. I spoke last week of Hitler's plans against Sweden and of his desire to get hold of the Swedish iron mines. He may think that a Russian conquest of Finland would give him the pretext he wants for trying to put Sweden in his pocket. There has been no lack of threats to Sweden in the German press and in semi-official German statements to the newspapers of neutral countries. Meanwhile the Swedes have been sending volunteers to Finland and have raised a fund of more than £400,000 to help her. Norway has also raised nearly £300,000; and Denmark has sent a number of lorries. So nobody knows quite how the situation will turn.

One guess may be as good as another. My guess would be that Hitler himself does not quite know what to do. If he doesn't, there may be reason for his bewilderment. I can only judge from certain things that have come, quite unofficially, to my knowledge within the past two or three weeks. Up to the beginning of December, when the Russian attack on Finland began, Hitler felt that Russia was on top and that Germany could not afford to be unpleasant to her. There seemed a chance that countries like Hungary, Yugoslavia, Roumania and the Balkans generally, to say nothing of other countries in Middle Asia, might be so frightened by the threat of Russian expansion that they would begin to look towards Germany and, perhaps, Italy for protection and help. But by mid-December the outlook had changed. Finland had inflicted such staggering defeats on Russia that it began to look as though Germany would be on top and that

Russia might have to ask for German good will and help. This view lasted until Christmas, when further news came of heavy Russian defeats. The news ran through the world like wildfire. In Italy, Hungary, Roumania, the Balkans and Middle Asia the feeling spread that, after all, the Russian colossus might have feet of clay, and that what the Finns were doing to defend themselves, other countries could do likewise. The King of Roumania visited his troops in Bessarabia, on whose borders Russia had begun to concentrate troops, and made a very stalwart speech to the effect that any attack upon Roumania would come up against an unbroken wall of national resistance. But in Germany it was felt that this new mood of confidence was tending to decrease the likelihood that countries which had been afraid of Russia would continue to look to Germany as a possible saviour from Russian domination. So, on balance, Hitler does not know whether Germany stands to lose or to gain by Finnish resistance to Russia.

While he is wondering, his ally, Italy, has been active. According to one account the Hungarian and Italian Foreign Ministers drafted the terms of an Italo-Hungarian military alliance at Venice the other day, a draft that is said to have been discussed by the Hungarian Regent and his Ministers at Budapest last Tuesday. If we hear that Count Csáky, the Hungarian Foreign Minister, has gone to Rome we may perhaps conclude that the draft has been more or less accepted. One of the conditions of this alleged Italo-Hungarian agreement is reported to be an improvement of the relations between Hungary and Roumania. Hungary has always wanted to get back the province of Transylvania—inhabited mainly by Roumanians—which was taken from Hungary and incorporated in the Kingdom of Roumania at the end of the last war. But Germany, who is now a direct neighbour of Hungary on the west and north-west, is believed to have promised Hungary that Transylvania shall return to Hungarian rule if Germany should ever get control of the rest of Roumanian territory, including the oil wells. Hungary may be wondering whether it would be quite safe to link up with Italy, and to make friends with Roumania, at the risk of offending Germany. And Hungarian perplexity may not be decreased by the fact that Count Ciano in his last speech again reaffirmed the Italo-German alliance.

I should not like to say offhand what Italy or, for that

matter, Hungary is driving at. I remember that in November 1932 a 'Europe Congress' was held in Rome, and that in the background of it a programme was secretly discussed between Hungary, Italy and Germany. This was a little more than two months before Hitler came into power in Germany. The real programme of this Congress, divulged by an indiscretion and published in London shortly afterwards, included the following points:

(1) An eventual curtailment of Roumanian unity, taking account of Russian claims to Bessarabia.

(2) The inclusion of Transylvania, with parts of Yugoslavia, in a Danubian Confederation under German and Hungarian leadership.

(3) Into this Confederation Hungary, with somewhat increased territory, would enter, together with Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and parts of Slovenia, after Yugoslavia should have been broken up.

(4) A Customs Union between this new Danubian Confederation and Germany, Austria and Italy.

(5) The reduced Kingdom of Roumania, with Serbia, Bulgaria, Albania and Greece would be formed into a Balkan federation under Italian influence.

Schemes like this are not worked out by chance, nor are they abandoned if they do not succeed at the first attempt. It was against them that in February 1934, the Roumanian Foreign Minister, M. Titulescu, with the help of the veteran Greek statesman, M. Venizélos, and of M. Litvinoff, the Russian Foreign Commissar, formed the Balkan Entente between Roumania, Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey. Those who remember these things may be tempted to ask whether anything of this kind was discussed between Counts Ciano and Csáky at Venice the other day and, if so, what the Balkan Entente thinks about it. They may find a provisional answer in the announcement last Wednesday that the representatives of the Balkan Entente, that is to say, those of Turkey, Roumania, Yugoslavia and Greece, will meet next month at Belgrade, the Yugoslav capital, to consider the position.

In my unofficial mind this announcement awakens one reflection. All the countries of the Balkan Entente, except Yugoslavia, have received pledges of support from Great Britain and France in case their vital interests should be endangered. With Turkey there is a Franco-British alliance.

THE WAR: EARLY PHASES

To Roumania and Greece the British and French pledges are unilateral. Nevertheless they exist, and are seriously meant. So the Western Allies can hardly be indifferent to what may take place at the Conference of the Balkan Entente in Belgrade next month.

Before then much may happen. Strange though it may seem, the central feature of the crazy news-reel which I have been unwinding may not be in South-Eastern Europe at all. It may still lie in North-Eastern Europe amid the frozen lakes and snow-covered wastes of the Russo-Finnish border.

THE LOW COUNTRIES

In mid-January the possibility that Hitler might be about to invade the Low Countries, Belgium and Holland, had caused acute anxiety in Paris and London. This danger had appeared to exist in November 1939 but had then subsided. It was hard to guess whether the renewal of his threat in January was a piece of bluff, or an attempt to extort blackmail, or a prelude to serious military movement. So I gave some account, political and historical, of the Low Countries and said:

Since the beginning of this war the Low Countries have tended to come together in face of a common danger. Natural though this may seem, it could not be taken for granted. In the war of 1914-18 Holland remained neutral while Germany invaded and occupied Belgium—though it was quite clear that only a German defeat in that war could save Dutch independence. Nor did it seem certain last autumn that if Holland were invaded in this war Belgium would not be neutral. But when the German threat became tangible last November King Leopold of Belgium and Queen Wilhelmina of Holland arranged a meeting. It is now thought (though no statement has been issued) that in the event of an attack upon either of them both countries will stand together. And it is also generally assumed that should Germany attack either country, Great Britain and France will help them both without delay and to the fullest possible extent.

What advantage can Germany hope to gain by attacking or even threatening the Low Countries? The advantages of a threat, were it successful, might be greater than the advan-

tages of attack. For some time past Germany, from her standpoint, has been complaining that neither Belgium nor Holland is strictly neutral since both of them have submitted to the British contraband control arrangements designed to stop not only goods from abroad consigned to Germany through Dutch or Belgian ports but goods from Germany that may be carried in Dutch or Belgian ships. The Germans argue that these arrangements damage Dutch and Belgian interests; and that Holland and Belgium ought therefore to protect those interests by refusing to recognize the lawfulness of the British arrangements and by using warships to convoy Dutch and Belgian merchantmen through the British and French blockade. If Belgium and Holland will not do this, the Germans have more than once declared, they will not be really neutral and will not be entitled to complain if Germany treats them as unneutral.

It looks as though these German threats were meant to force Holland and Belgium into something like the famous 'Continental System' which Napoleon tried to erect against Great Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Believing the English to be a nation of shopkeepers, he thought that nothing would wound them so much as to close every European market to their goods. Though he was not, at that time, so nearly the master of the whole of Europe as he became five or six years later, he did control Holland and Belgium, Naples and Spain, while the Tsar Paul I of Russia had formed a League of Armed Neutrality with Denmark, Sweden and Prussia for the protection of the rights of neutral shipping against British sea-power. With the help of this League Napoleon believed he could crush British trade. But just as the combination was beginning to look formidable, the Tsar was strangled in a Palace revolution in Russia, the Danish fleet was broken by Nelson's guns at Copenhagen, and the Northern League collapsed. If English merchandise could be delivered at Hamburg or Lübeck, Stockholm or St. Petersburg, the game was up.

Napoleon then understood, as Hitler may understand, that the policy of a universal blockade of Great Britain can only be carried out by a power possessing a universal empire. From this standpoint Hitler's ambition to make Germany mistress of the world is comprehensible. Meanwhile he may reckon that if Holland and Belgium can be frightened into opposing

British sea-power, they would not be able to resist a further demand for the use of their ports by Germany. Then he might apply the same terms to Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Something like this is, no doubt, the purpose of his threats to Belgium and Holland. I wonder whether Hitler or any German believes that the threat can succeed. Even if the Dutch and the Belgians were not so sturdy as they are; even if they were less determined than they are to defend their own independence, they have long had reason to know what fate would be in store for them and for their overseas possessions if Germany were ever to get the whip hand of them. The propagandist maps drawn by Hitler's people, as well as the writings of the 'Geopolitical' school of which Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Hess, is a prominent member, show Holland and Belgian Flanders as parts of Hitler's Reich, and the Belgian Congo and the Dutch East Indies as German possessions. So for Belgium and Holland the question is not one of a little more or a little less trade. It is a question of independent existence.

If this be the case, it may be asked, why have Holland and Belgium waited so long before coming together to consult in defence of all that they are and all that they have? The answer can only be given in the light of many centuries of complicated history. I do not pretend to know all the details of this history but I do know its broad lines. As a beginning I may perhaps say something that will sound frivolous but which serves to show how historical associations bear on everyday life.

The Belgians, and, for that matter, the Dutch also, are fond of the good things of life, though not precisely in the same way. Among the good things that Belgians are fond of is Burgundy wine, one of the great wines of France. In Belgium, people who can afford it drink more Burgundy and better Burgundy than Frenchmen drink in Paris. Yet Paris is nearer the Burgundy country than Belgium is. The reason is, I believe, that in the fifteenth century Belgium was first made into a nation by the Dukes of Burgundy. In his *History of Europe* our great English historian, Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, describes the ambitious work of the Burgundian Dukes—before Burgundy was incorporated in France under Louis XI—and shows how it fell to pieces after the death of Charles the Bold in 1477. 'Yet,' Mr. Fisher says, 'the work of the

Burgundian Dukes was not wholly in vain. They are the makers of Belgium. To the county of Flanders, which is the kernel of the modern Belgian Kingdom, they gave a novel sense of independence and unity . . . they made of Brussels, where they kept their Court, one of the most showy capitals of Europe. The commercial greatness of Antwerp owes much to their encouragement. It was their policy to make of Flanders, so far as this was possible, an economic unity. French in origin, in language, in tastes, they nevertheless set themselves to learn the Flemish language, and were too wise to attempt what indeed was impossible—the suppression of the Teutonic tongue in which so much of the business of Flanders was transacted.'

This is by no means the whole story but it is part of the story. Another part of it is how Belgium came to belong to Spain under the Emperor Charles V, grandson of a Burgundian princess. To this day Belgium remains a great commercial centre speaking French and Flemish languages, mainly Catholic in religion and substantially different in outlook and character from Holland. The Dutch, for their part, have a glorious record both of political and religious freedom, and of commercial greatness. If one were to cut out of the history of Europe the story of their struggle against Spain and the Spanish Inquisition in the sixteenth century, of the rise of the Dutch Republic, of the wisdom and valour of the Princes of Orange, of Dutch enterprise on sea and of Dutch wars with England, one would remove some of its most thrilling chapters. Prince William of Orange, who led the Low Countries in the struggle against Spain, dreamed of uniting them for ever. But his dream was shattered in 1578 when the Duke of Parma defeated him at Gembloux and kept Belgium for Spain. Thereafter it was fated that Holland and Belgium should lead a separate political existence except for a brief and uneasy union between them from 1815 to 1830 under William V of Orange. He was proclaimed king in March 1815. In 1830 the Belgians, however, revolted against Dutch rule, and the political relations between the two peoples remained unsettled until Belgium was constituted an independent kingdom by the Treaty of London of April 19, 1839. By this Treaty, Great Britain, France, Russia and Prussia guaranteed Belgian independence and neutrality. And it was the British signature to this Treaty which brought Great

Britain into war against Germany on August 4, 1914, when the Germans invaded Belgium and violated her neutrality.

Why, it may be asked, did Great Britain give this guarantee? Was it out of disinterested love for the Belgians? By no means. It was because the independence of the Low Countries had long been considered one of the main safeguards of England against invasion from the Continent. When Napoleon held Belgium he spoke of Antwerp as a pistol pointed at the heart of England. The guarantee of 1839 was really given against France who was suspected of wishing to make herself the ruling military power on the Continent and of desiring to control Belgium, if not Holland, for that purpose. This, too, was why Prussia joined in the guarantee, and why she renewed it when Germany was united under Prussia in 1870-1. But in 1914 the guarantee had to be made good by Great Britain and France together against a Germany that was aiming at the mastery of Europe and ultimately of the world.

So to-day a Nazi Germany, cherishing similar or greater aims, will find Great Britain and France ready to stand by Belgium and Holland should the safety of the Low Countries again be endangered. Meanwhile it is of more than historic interest that the Low Countries should now be taking counsel together with a unity of purpose they have not known since their fight against the forces of Spain in the sixteenth century.

THE MORAL ISSUE

Towards the end of January the B.B.C. Empire Service reverted to the general title 'World Affairs' for my talks, and wished them to deal mainly with the broad issues of the war rather than with 'the week's news.' On January 26 I spoke therefore of the price we were paying for ultimate victory 'over the foes not merely of Great Britain and France but of civilized humanity,' and mentioned particularly the sinking of the destroyer *Grenville* and of the flotilla leader *Exmouth* as part of that price. Then, by way of proving that I was not indulging in rhetoric when I spoke of 'the foes of civilized humanity,' I quoted the fierce denunciation of German behaviour in Poland that had been broadcast by the Vatican radio. The Vatican speaker told the world that in the part

of Poland under German control the assault upon elementary justice and decency was even more violent and persistent than in the Russian part. In comparison with the scrupulous neutrality of word and deed which the Vatican had maintained towards German 'frightfulness' in Belgium during the war of 1914-18, this denunciation of Germany's 'grievous affront to the moral conscience of mankind' struck me as especially significant.

The British press of all parties was no less outspoken than the Vatican radio. After summarizing its comment upon German misdeeds I added:

So, it would seem, the central problem of this war is two-fold. Its most urgent aspect is how to ward off the deadly danger with which German Nazism threatens our civilization. The Western Allies are fighting to provide an answer to this question. Beyond it lies the second aspect of the problem: 'What is to become of a German people that does, or allows itself to be used for doing, work so infamous as that which Germany is now doing in Poland and Czechoslovakia?' It is mainly on this aspect of the problem that I have been thinking during the past week. And I find an answer to my thoughts in a contribution which an eminent Swiss observer has made to one of the principal French reviews.

The truly important question, writes this neutral observer, is whether the profound immorality of the Nazi leaders is confined to them or whether it has invaded and corrupted the German nation itself. We must admit, he says, that it has corrupted almost all Germans below thirty years of age, and that older Germans who may not have succumbed to it are entirely without leadership. What chance is there, in these circumstances, of a rapid readaptation of the German people to civilized European life? We only know two things. The first is that Germany will not and cannot belong to Europe without a deep and lasting moral re-education of the German people. The second is that no one is yet in sight who could undertake this immense task. The task will be to restore to a whole people its lost morality or to give it a new morality. Will not this in any case have to be the work of several generations—to fill up the abyss which Hitlerism has dug out, or revealed, between Germans and Europeans?

To my mind this is the real problem of the war. I know

THE WAR: EARLY PHASES

that it weighs like a nightmare on the minds of my German friends who, in exile, are wondering what the future may hold in store for a Fatherland they still love and whose deliberate and calculated barbarism fills them with anguish. All agree that without military defeat there can be no hope for Germany and little hope for Europe. They look upon the Allied peoples as the paladins of civilization. But they, too, ask themselves where, in a defeated Germany, will the forces be found to build up a better German morality on sure foundations.

It is against this background that we need to see the war, to judge the co-operation between Germany and Russia, the heroism of Finland, the spirit of the Poles and of the Czechoslovaks, the losses and the unflinching determination of the British and the French, and the tragic heart-searchings of countries still neutral. The very size and the fundamental nature of its central problem give this war a character which no war has possessed since John Sobieski, King of Poland, compelled the Ottoman hosts to raise the siege of Vienna in 1683. Then Poland saved Europe. Her reward was to be cut to pieces, little more than a century later, by some of the dynasties whose thrones she had helped to save. From that vivisection she arose, reunited, after another one hundred and fifty years, in 1918. Now she is again dismembered and crushed, though not without having given, by her self-sacrifice, a chance to the peoples of Western Europe again to save themselves.

A HITLERITE ANNIVERSARY

January 30, 1940, was the seventh anniversary of Hitler's appointment to the German Chancellorship by President Field-Marshal von Hindenburg. In my talk on February 2 I took this occasion to give some account of Hitlerism and Nazism, together with the reasons why President von Hindenburg made Hitler Chancellor. All trustworthy explanations, I said, agreed that the veteran President was persuaded to give the Chancellorship to a former Corporal, whom he despised, by an intrigue in which Herr von Papen, an ex-Chancellor (who was in 1940 German Ambassador to Turkey), played a large part together with Herr von

Ribbentrop, Hitler's Foreign Minister. The intrigue is said to have succeeded partly because Hitler had promised to hush up a financial scandal, involving President Hindenburg, which Hitler's predecessor in the Chancellorship, General von Schleicher, had threatened to reveal, and partly because it was thought that once Hitler should be in office, President von Hindenburg and the Prussian Conservatives and Nationalists would have the whip hand of him and could keep him in a sort of cage until he was discredited and could be got rid of.

The idea of putting Hitler in a cage, I said, is another point on which all accounts of his advent to power agree. My talk continued:

No secret was made of it at the time—so little, indeed, that I remember having written some public comment upon it on February 5, 1933, before Hitler had been Chancellor for a week. Here is what I wrote:

'Herr Hitler's Chancellorship of the German Reich writes an immense note of interrogation over the future of Germany, and not of Germany alone. Directly and indirectly it may affect the rest of the world. What does the advent of Hitler mean? . . . Have President von Hindenburg and his 'comrade,' Herr von Papen, got Hitler into a cage before they wring his neck, or are *they* in the cage? . . . If President von Hindenburg now thinks it best to have the enemy in the citadel, Hitler may think it best to be inside the citadel. The contest between the old East Prussian Field-Marshal and the ex-Austrian house-painter will be worth watching, not in Germany alone.'

The sequel soon showed who was 'in the cage.' It showed, too, that a statement in Hitler's message to his followers on New Year's Day, 1933—a full month before he became Chancellor—ought to be taken literally. It said: 'If Germany is to be put on her feet again, it can only be by a movement as intolerant and as ready to take prompt action as its opponents are. Where other movements have failed only the National Socialists can win victory.'

I think I can fairly claim always to have taken Hitler seriously. Much reading of his book, *Mein Kampf*, and some knowledge of the atmosphere in which his mind and his ideas were formed, made me look upon him as a sinister

fanatic who would stick at nothing to gain his ends. For this reason I have listened to, or read, all the speeches he has delivered on January 30 during the past six years, anniversary speeches in which he reviewed what had been done and foretold what would be done. Now I have been reading with some care his anniversary harangue last Tuesday evening. It was not a good-tempered nor altogether a confident utterance; but I am not inclined to call it, as a leading British newspaper calls it, a 'weak tirade.' Though it was a tissue of angry falsehoods from beginning to end, they were falsehoods that will have struck most of his German hearers as truths. They should be read, by an effort of imagination, with the eyes of Germans who for seven years have been allowed to hear little else. And it must not be forgotten that they are in line with what Herr von Ribbentrop has written in the recent German White Book upon the reasons for this war.

To compare this White Book with the British Blue Book and the French Yellow Book upon the outbreak of the war is to compare a vacuum with fullness. If one puts aside a few insignificant telegrams sent by German ambassadors abroad, the 344 pages of the German White Book are an aching void. All else is as true as the following extract from Herr von Ribbentrop's Preface to it.

'England (he writes), exclusively and alone, was responsible for the war and willed the war in order to destroy Germany. . . . Immediately after the conference at Munich the British "will to war" became ever more manifest. . . . The British Government used the infatuation of the Polish Government—an infatuation which Great Britain had deliberately induced—in order to unloose the long-planned war against Germany. . . . An account of the whole period since 1918 would be necessary in order to show the hypocritical and wanton British policy to its full extent, and to reveal England as standing in the way of every effort of Germany to free herself from the chains of the Dictate of Versailles, and as preventing any possibility of the revision of this Treaty by peaceful negotiation.'

Though there is not a word of truth in it, this is now official German doctrine, and no German in Germany is allowed to hear anything else, or dare listen to anything else except at the risk of penal servitude or decapitation. In his

anniversary speech last Tuesday night Hitler taught the same doctrine. The German people, he said, feel no hate against France or Britain. But when France and Britain started their campaign of hatred, he had to answer these hate-mongers. Therefore he gave the order to enlighten the German people. To-day the hate-mongers admit that they wanted the war. Yes, Poland would probably have come to an agreement, but they—the British and the French—did not want it. They confess that they did not want to come to an understanding. They wanted war. 'Well, then' he shouted, amid frantic applause, 'they have started the war, and I can only say to France and Britain that they, too, will get all the war they want.' But Hitler improved on Herr von Ribbentrop by saying that in 1914, twenty-five years ago, the German nation also went into a struggle which was forced upon it without being adequately prepared.

There is only one of these falsehoods that I need nail down. It is Hitler's statement that Poland would probably have come to an agreement with him but that the British and the French did not want it. The truth is the exact contrary. After Hitler's destruction of Czechoslovakia on March 15 last year, Poland knew that her turn would come next, and resolved not to go under without fighting. In the hope of preventing a German attack on Poland, the British and French Governments promised to help Poland if she were attacked. Then, as the British and French documents show, they did everything they could to persuade Poland not to give Hitler any pretext for an attack. Poland followed this advice. At the same time Great Britain and France told Germany repeatedly that if she attacked Poland they would fight. Neither Hitler nor Ribbentrop would believe them; nor would they believe the German Ambassador in London who told them the same thing. So Hitler attacked Poland and the war came.

But in his speech Hitler also said that in 1914 Germany had been forced into war without being adequately prepared for it. This is utterly false as I have the best reason to know. As early as August 1908 I learned—and had the privilege of discussing what I had learned with King Edward VII who, like the British Government, knew what I knew but knew it better—that Germany meant to invade France through Belgium, and to threaten England at the first favourable opportunity. Lord Haldane, who was Secretary of State for

War in the Liberal Cabinet of 1906-14, informed me afterwards, in writing, that the reason why he had created the first British Expeditionary Force was because he had found out in Berlin that Germany intended to seize the French and Belgian Channel ports as bases against England.

In the autumn of 1912, when Austria threatened to attack Serbia, Germany was within an ace of carrying out this plan. I knew of it in Vienna, where I was then stationed, and sent a warning to London. War was then averted; and Germany began to persuade the British Government that if it made a few graceful concessions war could be averted altogether. The British Government made the concessions. In August 1914 it found out its mistake.

The truth is that Germany prepared and let loose the war of 1914 for the same pan-German purpose as that for which Hitler prepared and let loose the war of September 1939. The present British Government wanted war as little as the Asquith-Grey Government of 1914 wanted it. Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues believed, quite sincerely, that the Munich Agreement of September 30, 1938, would avert war, and that even the sacrifice of Czechoslovakia ought not to weigh in the balance against so immense a boon. I thought them wrong then, and said so, publicly. So today I have some right to call Ribbentrop and Hitler's statements about the British 'will to war' a tissue of deliberate lies.

At the same time I believe that these lies are now so firmly planted in German minds that we are compelled to take the effects of them as a major truth. This truth is that Hitler's Germany will leave no stone unturned to make sure that military triumph shall accredit its mendacity. I take Hitler's threats quite seriously. I think we shall have war, 'all the war we want,' though with the saving clause that he and his Germany will get rather more than all the war they want. Undoubtedly they are now in a tight place. Their supply of petrol and other essential war materials is not superabundant—and, as has been well said, this is largely a war of petrol. The pressure which is now being put on Roumania as a producer of petrol proves it.

The Roumanian Government was obliged some months ago to make an agreement with Germany under which large quantities of petrol were to be supplied month by month. For various reasons the specified amounts could not be delivered

nor can they now be easily transported, seeing that the Danube is frozen and railway communications are difficult. But Roumania has arranged to bring her whole output of oil under government control, though some of the largest oil wells belong to British and French companies. This may not mean that Germany will or can compel Roumania to supply all German needs. Nor may it mean that supplies to Great Britain and France will be stopped. Certainly Roumania's position is not enviable. What she might do if Germany attacked her cannot be foreseen. The Germans, for their part, are desperately anxious that there should be no repetition of what happened in 1916 and 1917 when Germany invaded Roumania, only to find the oil wells blown up and past repair.

So we must keep our eyes on Roumania and South-Eastern Europe generally. The Roumanian oil problem might have been less acute if Russia had been able to give Germany any surplus of Russian petrol. But the Russian attack on Finland has used up so much petrol that Russia has none to spare and barely enough for herself. And the attack on Finland may cost Russia dear in other ways. It has made Russia dependent upon Germany for support whereas, before the attack on Finland, and the Finnish resistance, Germany was dependent on Russia. So Russia who has, or had, her own designs on Roumania, and can hardly have wished Germany to get hold of the Roumanian oil fields, may be obliged to let Hitler have a free hand.

By the end of this week the outlook may be a little clearer in South-Eastern Europe. The governments of the Balkan Entente—Turkey, Roumania, Greece and Yugoslavia—are about to meet in conference at Belgrade. To three of them British and French pledges of help have been given. If they stand together they may be more than a match for anything Hitler can do.

'IMponderables'

Since no event of outstanding importance occurred during the next few days I tried, in my talk on February 9, to weigh 'imponderables,' the intangible moral factors which even Bismarck thought decisive in war. When all is said and done, I

argued, it was the imponderable moral element of indignation and resentment against the German invasion of Belgium in 1914 that brought about the downfall of the Empire Bismarck had created. Had it not been for that flagrant act of international immorality, Great Britain would not have entered the war in August 1914 in time to help in checking the German onrush towards Paris and in winning the decisive battle of the Marne. And it was a similar act of international immorality—the declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare against neutral shipping on January 1, 1917—which brought the United States into the war on April 6 of that year. Then I said:

In the present war the facts of unwarranted German aggression are even plainer than they were in 1914. Equally plain is the wickedness of German submarine attacks upon neutral shipping, upon lightships, and even of the machine-gunning upon seamen struggling in the icy water. In the most neutral of neutral countries there is only one feeling about these foul deeds—a feeling of horrified anger. Worse still are the authentic accounts which reach the outside world of German abominations in Poland. Sooner or later, one must believe, retribution will overtake the perpetrators of these deliberate crimes. Meanwhile, certain imponderables that were not evident last week have crept into the situation. They are worth recording.

The first comes from a Polish source. Early in September, when the German troops entered the Polish town of Bydgoszcz, or Bromberg, in Western Poland (which is, or was, inhabited by a majority of Poles and a minority of Germans), fighting broke out in the streets between the Poles and the German troops. In the course of this fighting four or five German civilians appear to have been killed. The German troops and the Gestapo, or Secret State Police, thereupon decided to execute large numbers of Polish civilians. All persons of standing or eminence were lined up against a wall and shot. The same fate was suffered by the leaders and members of Polish youth organizations, especially the Boy Scouts. Boys of eleven to thirteen years were mercilessly executed. At last the German civilians of Bydgoszcz were so outraged by this deliberate slaughter that they rushed in between the German firing squads and another batch of

Polish victims and shouted: 'These people are innocent. You shall not shoot them without shooting us.'

For the time being the massacre ceased.

This incident is related by a Polish newspaper published in Paris. It tends to show that among the Germans who had lived in freedom under Polish rule some courageous uprightness remained. All honour to them.

A second 'imponderable' is a manifesto of warning issued to the German nation by the exiled leaders of the German Social Democratic Party in France. It will reach, it may already have reached, Germany through secret channels despite the watchfulness of the Gestapo. Some of its passages run:

'In Poland a national tragedy on an immense scale is in progress. The mass murder of Polish civilians, women and children, in the war is being followed by a systematic campaign to annihilate the whole of the Polish nation. The victims among the Polish people cannot be counted; they can only be estimated. Great provinces have been annexed by Germany, and here the last Pole is being systematically hunted out of house and home. . . . The concentration in a few districts, under terrible living conditions, of the Polish people who are robbed of all their possessions and driven about like animals, amounts to mass murder on a scale of millions. . . . If the German nation does not itself take action to destroy Hitler, if it does not dissociate itself from his crimes, the victims of Nazi policy will inculcate the German people also. . . . Therefore we Germans say to the German people: "Do not make yourselves guilty of this terrible crime by tacit acceptance, toleration or even approval of it. Do not let the world think that all the forces of justice and morality have been killed in the German people. Rise up against this crime. Remember that it is nobler to make a sacrifice in the fight for right and freedom than to give your lives for criminals."'

How many Germans will hear, and how many will heed, this warning cannot be guessed. Some will certainly hear it. At all events it should be made known throughout the world.

After some account of the fighting between Russia and Finland and of the conference of the Balkan Entente at Belgrade which, I thought, had strengthened belief in South-Eastern Europe that if

the Balkan countries could hold together they would have no need to fear anybody, my talk concluded:

It is now five months and a week since Great Britain and France declared war upon Germany after her unprovoked and criminal invasion of Poland. If little, except the destruction of Poland, has gone 'according to plan' in the military sphere, much has happened to range the ultimately decisive imponderables against the aggressors. Sympathizers with German Nazism have been shocked and bewildered. Sympathizers with Russian Bolshevism have been estranged. Believers in what a great Frenchman once called the 'in-dwelling righteousness of things' have been heartened and confirmed in their belief. If it be still too early to paraphrase the word of another great Frenchman, and to say: 'Freedom is on the march. Nothing can stop it,' I can at least express my own profound conviction that week by week and month by month the truth and justice of the Allied cause will bring the world nearer to the day when valour in the service of righteousness shall have its triumphant reward.

In saying this I was not professing a confidence I did not feel. My task, as I understood it, was to interpret to the outer world, and especially to the peoples of the British Commonwealth and Empire, the spirit of the British nation at home. This spirit pervaded the whole atmosphere. I should have been wrong not to reflect and to interpret it. In the following weeks and months of the spring of 1940 it was to be put to a hard test. How it stood that test subsequent chapters will record.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE APPROACH OF WOE

February to May 1940

THE period between the beginning of February and the great German offensive in the West on May 10, 1940, was marked by a number of seemingly disjointed episodes. A fierce storm was obviously gathering. How and where it would break none could tell. So uncertain did President Roosevelt feel the outlook to be that he sent Mr. Sumner Welles, the Under-Secretary of the State Department in Washington, on an official mission to Italy, France, Germany and Great Britain for the purpose of studying conditions in Europe and of advising the President and the Secretary of State upon them. In my talk on February 16 I treated this mission as the outstanding event of the week, and said:

I have not the honour of knowing Mr. Sumner Welles personally but I do know of the high esteem in which he is held by people competent to judge his character and his ability. On the strength of this evidence I should put him down as a first-rate man. And I feel pretty sure that neither President Roosevelt nor Mr. Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, both of whom I have had the honour of meeting, would have chosen Mr. Sumner Welles for so hard and responsible a job if they, too, had not thought him a first-rate man.

What is his job? By all accounts it is to ask questions and to say nothing. He is not to act as a mediator or even as an intermediary. He will not tell the German Government what he may have heard in Italy, nor will he say to the British or

the French Government how his questions may have been answered in Berlin or Rome. He will report solely to President Roosevelt and to Mr. Cordell Hull, and his report will be secret. His questions, I should imagine, are likely to be both frank and shrewd. Whoever undertakes to answer them in such a way as to impress or convince a hard-headed man, who has all the information of the American State Department at his finger's ends, will need to be either very straightforward or uncommonly astute.

In London, at any rate, Mr. Sumner Welles will get straightforward answers. The Prime Minister said no more than the truth when he told the House of Commons on Tuesday that the British Government will be ready 'to welcome the President's representative and to take him fully into their confidence, with the object of assisting the President to form an estimate of the present situation.' But, it may be asked, why should the President need to send a special mission to Europe. Is there not an American Diplomatic Service? Though I know nothing of President Roosevelt's own reasons, I can think of several reasons that might account for his decision. So, for what they may be worth, I will give them.

The power and the responsibility of a President of the United States are peculiar and enormous. He is the country's 'Chief Executive.' A great American lawyer, who was once Ambassador to London and afterwards a candidate for the Presidency, told me some years ago that a President of the United States has power to lead his country into war though he cannot constitutionally conclude peace without the approval of a two-thirds majority in the Senate. This power puts on the President a terrific responsibility. It is quite certain that President Roosevelt wishes to keep his country out of war. So, for that matter, did Woodrow Wilson who was elected President for a second term in November 1916 because he had, until then, kept the United States out of war. But six months later the action of Germany compelled him to declare war. In 1914 and 1915 President Wilson twice sent his friend, Colonel House, to Europe on visits of inquiry. On May 29, 1914, House wrote to him from Berlin: 'The situation is extraordinary. It is militarism run stark mad. . . . There is some day to be an awful cataclysm.' Colonel House saw clearly what was afoot in Germany three months before the

war of 1914. Mr. Sumner Welles may judge the situation in Europe quite as clearly to-day.

The regular ambassadors of the United States are not always professional diplomatists or trained observers of foreign countries. At the State Department and the White House in Washington their judgment of a situation may not be thought absolutely conclusive. One of the reasons, for example, why Colonel House was sent to London before and during the last war was that neither President Wilson nor the State Department felt able to see eye to eye with Mr. Walter Page, their eminent ambassador to Great Britain. They were not sure that he understood how feeling was running in America. So they wanted information from an independent observer.

In a small, unofficial way I found that the same kind of desire existed at Washington when I happened to be there in the autumn of 1927. To my surprise President Coolidge asked me to call upon him. He was thought to be a very taciturn man. So I expected a short interview in which, as the British ambassador in Washington warned me, the President would probably say 'No' twice, and that would be all. But instead of one I had two interviews which lasted altogether four and a half hours. Never have I been so closely examined upon every aspect of an international situation as I was by President Coolidge. He was remarkably well informed. He had conscientiously read all the reports from American ambassadors and ministers abroad, but he wished, before making up his mind on certain important matters, to hear what he called 'independent testimony.' So, if I may judge by this experience, and by some impressions I got during a talk with President Roosevelt more than three years ago, the job of Mr. Sumner Welles will be to provide the White House and the State Department with 'independent testimony.'

There may, of course, be other reasons which no Briton can presume to judge. This is a 'Presidential year' in the United States. Some time next summer candidates for the Presidency will have to be nominated. Nobody knows whether President Roosevelt will, or will want to be, nominated for a third term. Neither he nor anybody else can tell how events may move during the next few months. But he will certainly wish to have the fullest and the most direct knowledge of the situa-

tion to guide him aright in what may become momentous decisions. This, I think, is the deepest reason for the Sumner Welles mission.

But now we come to the situation itself. It is governed for the moment, and may be governed progressively, by co-operation between Hitler and Stalin. Last Monday it was announced that a Russo-German economic agreement had been concluded and that it provides for an exchange of goods worth 1,000,000,000 marks or, roughly, £70,000,000. The terms of the agreement have not been published, though some very shrewd guesses about them are made by people who ought to know. Russia, they say, has agreed that Germany shall put into good order the Polish oil wells in the part of Poland occupied by Russia, and shall use the oil produced—but shall give the wells back to Russia after the war. (If Germany gets the wells, I don't quite see her giving them back in a hurry!) Russia, for her part, is said to have undertaken to open new oil fields in her own territory with the help of German engineers, and to have agreed that German experts shall establish new iron and steel works in Russia. Besides, according to these guesses, Russia as a 'neutral' is to buy supplies abroad for Germany. Meanwhile Russia is to deliver whatever foodstuffs and fodder she can spare. Germany is to build a new railway through the Russian part of Poland to Czernowitz on the Roumanian border.

If these are the main features of the Russo-German economic agreement they would certainly look impressive. But Russia is a country where there are apt to be more slips between the cup and the lip than elsewhere. A number of German experts and agents have certainly gone to Moscow where—if reports that have reached Belgium are to be believed—they are being treated with suspicion and are not allowed to leave the capital. At the same time the Russians continue to hold their new frontier against Germany in great strength, and are fortifying it from the Baltic on the north to the Carpathians on the south. These reports suggest that the love between Hitler and Stalin may not be altogether brotherly.

I think we should treat all these reports with caution. There are signs, political and military, that Hitler is really helping Stalin against Finland. Other signs point to a Russo-German agreement about Roumania. Germany is certainly

making military preparations on a large scale in Central Europe. But on the other hand the presence of strong French and British forces in the Middle East, and the very firm attitude of Turkey, who has just turned a lot of Germans out of Istanbul, seem to be causing hesitation in Berlin; and now that the first Australian and New Zealand contingents have reached Egypt and Palestine Hitler may think twice before he extends active military operations to the neighbourhood of the Black Sea.

For the moment the greater part of Europe is frozen up. The great waterways are blocked with ice, many railways are snowbound, and when the thaw comes floods may be troublesome. But these conditions have not prevented what look like preparations behind the German front for a big offensive in the West. I say 'look like' because one can never tell whether these things are not meant as a blind. They may be a prelude to action on a large scale somewhere, or they may mean that Hitler has not yet made up his mind where, how and when to strike.

If I were sure that the gallant Finns could hold out and beat off the terrific Russian offensive that has now been going on against the Mannerheim Line for more than two weeks, and so gain time for adequate help to reach them, I should be inclined to doubt whether Mr. Sumner Welles will find a situation very different from what it is today. But there are circumstantial reports of strong German pressure on Sweden to prevent her from allowing adequate help to reach Finland, especially from Great Britain and France. A well-known Finn, now in London, said publicly last Tuesday that skilled German officers are helping the Russian forces against Finland. He added: 'We have reason to expect, before long, a German expeditionary force in the south of Finland. We must expect a stab in the back, exactly as in the case of Poland.' Nevertheless he believed that if Finland could hold out until the middle of April, her defence from the spring onwards would be worthy of her defence during the winter.

To me it seems that if Germany is helping Russia against Finland it can only be as one part of a much wider bargain. Another part of this bargain may be intended to perpetuate the enslavement of Central Europe to Germany. The literal enslavement as serf-labourers of millions of Poles and of hundreds of thousands of Czechs by Germany suggests the

tate which a Russo-German victory would hold in store for other peoples. A former American diplomatist, now in England, asks: 'Is Hitler to undo the work of Lincoln? The American Civil War needed four years' hard fighting to root out the slavery of blacks from the soil of the United States. This war will decide if the slavery of whites is to be Hitler's contribution to a barbarized world, and if men and women are to become his permanent chattels. That danger should stir the hearts of those who still value human freedom.'

This, too, is a point upon which Mr. Sumner Welles may perhaps ask questions. At all events I rejoice that he should be coming to look into things on the spot.

'COSSACK' AND 'ALTMARK'

The gallant exploit of the British destroyer *Cossack* in releasing more than 300 British merchant seamen from the semi-demi-German warship *Altmark* in a Norwegian fiord, was the main theme of my talk on February 23. It ran:

The *Altmark* had been the supply—and prison—ship of the *Graf Spee*. More than 300 British merchant seamen had long been kept under hatches in foul conditions by the *Altmark's* Nazi captain. When the men of the *Cossack* boarded her and rescued these prisoners they made us prouder than ever of our Navy.

In other ways the week has been less good. Though the sinking of the destroyer *Daring* by an enemy torpedo, with the loss of 157 officers and men out of a total company of 162, is a slight loss in comparison with the heavy damage we have done to the German navy, we mourn the sacrifice of every free life in the struggle against Hitlerism. It is costing the lives of neutrals as well as our own. In the week ended February 18 fifteen neutral ships, totalling 46,801 tons, and five British ships, totalling 39,276 tons, were sunk by the enemy. Most of the crews were saved though many lives were lost through the Nazi 'blockade by murder.' Still, here again, these losses are not comparable to what German submarine piracy managed to do in the last war. Some neutrals are still unwilling to sail under British convoy which makes the odds against the sinking of any convoyed ship 472 to one, though others begin to feel that the risk of German displeasure may

be worth running for the sake of greater safety. Of the 160 neutral ships which last week accepted British escort, all reached their destinations safely. Up to February 14, no fewer than 8,969 ships had been convoyed since the war began, and of these only 19 were lost. Among the lost were only two neutral vessels, one of which struck a German mine.

Unlike the Germans, who are never told the truth, we and the world are regularly told. We take the bad with the good and face the facts. When the bad is bad we set our teeth. When the good is good we feel we have a right to be glad. Our gladness over the action of the *Cossack* is something more than pleasure at what a member of the *Cossack's* crew called 'the singeing of Hitler's moustache.' It was the spirit of the whole affair that delighted us. If those 300 prisoners had been allowed by Norway to be taken through her territorial waters to Germany, there to be paraded as a triumphant demonstration of Hitler's successful piracy, the anger of our people would have waxed hot. So, seeing that the Norwegian Government was doing nothing to set the prisoners free, our Admiralty, with the approval of the Cabinet, told the *Cossack* to go and fetch them. It fetched them in a style worthy of our finest naval traditions since the days of Nelson. Hitler's rage bears witness to it.

Now there is a pother over the question whether the *Cossack* violated international law or not. The Norwegian Government claims it did not know that British prisoners were on board the *Altmark*. If it knew, its failure to set them free was a breach of neutrality. If it did not know we think it should have tried to find out. The Prime Minister said, very moderately, in the House of Commons last Tuesday what we all think—and, for that matter, what Americans think—about the official Norwegian plea of ignorance. Considering that the presence of British prisoners on the *Altmark* was prominently reported weeks ago in the press of the world, Mr. Chamberlain said he could not but regard the Norwegian profession of ignorance 'as a most surprising statement.'

Upon the international law of the matter a former German naval officer, now in England, makes three observations. The first is that the captain of the *Altmark*, who is not a naval officer, took part in acts of warfare.

If the Germans had caught a British merchant captain who

had done anything of the kind, they would promptly have 'liquidated' him by a court-martial. On the behaviour of the Norwegian authorities this German naval officer says that they 'grossly failed in the fulfilment of their duty' after their attention had been drawn to the suspicion that prisoners were on board the *Altmark*. And his third observation mentions what Bismarck did during the Franco-German war of 1870 when, after the fall of the French fortress of Sedan, numbers of French soldiers got away into neutral Belgium and slipped back thence into France. Bismarck reminded the Belgian Government that international law gives any belligerent the right to aid a neutral who proves unable to protect the neutrality of its frontier, and to send reinforcements to that frontier.

Since territorial waters form part of a frontier, this, says the German naval officer, corresponds exactly to what the British Admiralty have done. He thinks the only blemish was that the British request that an Anglo-Norwegian guard should be put on board the *Altmark*, pending examination of the vessel, was made by a British officer to a Norwegian officer, not through the regular diplomatic channels.

If this is the only blemish on the *Cossack's* action, from the standpoint of international law, it might perhaps be removed by a British apology to Norway for having failed, under stress of circumstances, to tell the British Minister at Oslo to go to the Norwegian Foreign Office in a top hat. Whether such an apology would assuage Herr Hitler's grief I cannot judge.

The background of the *Altmark* affair is, of course, more serious. When the Germans captured an American vessel, the *City of Flint*, last autumn and put a German prize crew on board, Norway released the vessel, let it go back to the United States, and interned the German prize crew. What can have happened in the meantime to change Norwegian policy?

One word, I think, accounts for the change. That word is 'intimidation.' A politer name for it is 'German pressure.' More than once in these talks I have mentioned the pressure which Germany was putting on Sweden and Norway. Though I had no official information I did not speak at random. German pressure on both countries has been constant, severe and not unsuccessful. Unless I am misinformed it was accompanied by repeated threats that unless Sweden should give a binding undertaking not to allow any sub-

stantial foreign help to pass through her territory on the way to Finland, Germany would take drastic action against her. Rightly or wrongly I interpret the King of Sweden's declaration to his Ministers last Monday as confirmation of this. He said: 'I have considered it my unavoidable duty to try to keep our country outside the present fateful conflict in the world as long as possible. . . . I have followed the struggle of our brother country, Finland, against a superior force with the greatest admiration the whole time. From the beginning Sweden has tried, with volunteers and in manifold other ways, to help that country, but from the very beginning I notified Finland that, unfortunately, she could not count on military intervention on the part of Sweden. With sorrow in my heart and after due deliberation I have reached the conclusion that we must stick to this attitude in the present situation.'

King Gustav went on to express the 'firm view' that if Sweden intervened in Finland now, his country would run the gravest risk of being involved 'not only in war with Russia but also in the war between the Great Powers,' and in such a situation it would probably be impossible to give Finland the help she is now receiving and which Sweden is prepared to give 'with warm hands' also in future.

'This distinction between war with Russia and war 'between the Great Powers' strikes me as significant. Is not Russia a 'Great Power'? Perhaps the King of Sweden meant that, though she is making war on Finland, Russia looks upon herself as being neutral in the war between Germany and the Western Allies. Since it stands to reason that Swedish military intervention in Finland would not involve Sweden in war with Great Britain or France, it seems clear that King Gustav must have meant war with Germany.

In fairness to the Scandinavian countries we must remember that they might find themselves in an awkward, not to say a desperate, plight if Germany should attack or invade them. They feel the same horror of war as we ourselves, and the French, felt in September 1938 when Germany threatened to invade Czechoslovakia. To avoid war we then pressed Czechoslovakia to give up her strong fortifications and to sacrifice her splendid army. So we are not exactly entitled to throw stones at Sweden or Norway now.

How the struggle in Finland will turn nobody can yet tell.

During the past week the Russians have broken into, but not through, the Mannerheim Line at very heavy cost. Their advance now seems to have been checked; and the Finns have won some important successes on other parts of their front. The help they have already received is beginning to tell; but as Russia is terribly anxious to smash Finland before the war puts a heavier strain on Russian military and economic resources we must expect a renewal of the Russian offensive in the near future.

This hard winter has caught Russia ill-prepared for big military operations. Her attack upon Finland was worse than a crime—it was a blunder. As a shrewd judge of the Russian position wrote last Tuesday: 'But for the blunder over Finland, the Roumanian province of Bessarabia might have been part of Russia by now, Roumania carved up (between Russia and Germany) and Soviet naval bases established on the Black Sea.' Roumania knows this quite well; and she is doing her best to hold the balance even between Germany and the Allies by limiting her supplies of oil to them all. She may also be taking heart of grace from the firm behaviour of Turkey and the presence of strong British and French forces in the Middle East.

General Weygand, the Commander-in-Chief of those forces, is in close touch with the Turkish Government at Ankara. Mr. Anthony Eden's rapid trip by air to Egypt and Palestine, and his welcome to the Australian and New Zealand contingents, have not been unnoticed in South-Eastern Europe. Incidentally, Mr. Eden's trip, like the presence of Mr. Winston Churchill and other members of the War Cabinet at Plymouth when the *Exeter* came home, war-scarred and triumphant from her part in the battle of the River Plate, have increased our gladness this week because they showed just that touch of imagination which we have been waiting for since the war began. Together with the splendid work of the destroyer *Cossack*, this touch gives us a feeling that we may be getting morally and mentally 'on top' of the enemy.

One other aspect of the outlook in the Near and Middle East deserves attention. If Russia and Germany should attack Roumania, whom Great Britain is pledged to help, or should they involve Turkey in hostilities, Russia might have reason to regret it. She has to keep a large army and air force in the

Far East to watch Japan. The oil for this army and air force goes from Baku on the Caspian Sea to Batum on the Black Sea and is shipped thence to the Far East through the Dardanelles, the Mediterranean and Suez. So it is at the mercy of the British and French Navies, to say nothing of what Turkey might do. Besides, Russia has been short of food this winter. Her agriculture depends entirely upon tractors which also depend upon oil from Baku. Now the main Baku oil field is within range of aircraft operating from Turkey.

So people in Moscow are, no doubt, thinking hard. They may wish to goodness—or to badness—that they had left Finland alone. And the little affair of the *Altmark* in a Norwegian fiord is there to remind them of the kind of spirit in which John Bull is apt to fight.

THREE SPEECHES

The greater part of my talk on March 1 dealt with speeches rather than events or deeds. I explained that events were 'like wavelets on the great current of things,' and that I wanted to speak of the currents.

Among the events were the flights of British airmen over Central Europe, including Vienna, Prague, Berlin and the Baltic; the bombing of German warships off Heligoland; the destruction of German bombers off our coasts by New Zealand and Australian as well as British airmen; and the sinking of four German U-boats. The number of merchant vessels safely convoyed was steadily increasing, only 24 out of 10,000 escorted since the war began having been lost by enemy action. On the other hand three out of four German blockade runners had been captured, and the fourth sunk off the Norwegian coast.

In the field of diplomatic action the first place was taken by a letter from President Roosevelt to the Pope. Its terms resembled those in which the British and French Prime Ministers had spoken. Then came a speech by Mr. Winston Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, in the House of Commons on the Navy estimates. He said that by the end of 1939 the Germans had lost at least half the seventy U-boats with which they began the war,

and of the remainder they could hardly have more than ten working against us at one time. Of these a satisfactory number had since been sunk, though the losses we had suffered showed how vast must be our preparations to meet the fuller attack which might come later on. Very large numbers of anti-U-boat vessels were being built; and we had, besides, found the way to master the magnetic mine. This year, Mr. Churchill went on, we shall have a quarter of a million sailors to look after the enemy who may, of course, apply criminal methods on a large scale, for Hitler and his Nazis 'have quite definitely exceeded the worst villainies which Imperial Germany committed in the last war.'

'One of the most extraordinary things,' he added, 'I have ever known in my experience is the way in which German illegalities, atrocities and brutalities are coming to be accepted as if they were part of the ordinary day-to-day conditions of war.' As for ourselves, 'humanity rather than legal pedantry must be our chief guide; and judging by the *Altmark* episode this seems to be the opinion not only of the British nation but of the civilized world.'

The whole of our sea control, Mr. Churchill insisted, depends upon our superiority over the enemy in big ships as well as in small. Very shortly, five new modern battleships will join the Fleet; and against them the enemy can only bring two. 'Though the *Barham* and the *Nelson*, two of our older battleships, had been hit, one by a torpedo and one by a magnetic mine, both were so stout that they returned to harbour under their own steam; and, apart from the *Royal Oak* and the *Courageous*, no other of our large ships have been damaged or sunk since the outbreak of war or during these very difficult winter months.

As for our merchant shipping, we had lost on balance rather less than 200,000 tons in six months as compared with the 450,000 tons net loss in the single month of April 1917. In tonnage we had captured more cargoes destined for the enemy than we lost ourselves; and when the less than 200,000 tons of our losses were deducted from the 21,000,000 tons of merchant shipping that flies the British flag, the margin of safety was still broad. Mr. Churchill concluded:

'I will not make any prophecies about the future which is doubly veiled by the obscurities and uncertainties of war.

But personally I shall not be content, nor do I think the House should be content, if we do not reach and maintain a control of the seas equal to the highest standard of the last war and enable the Navy once again to play a decisive part in the general victory of the Allies.'

Now I come to a speech by the Prime Minister in which he defined our war aims. He spoke of the war as 'our crusade' and compared it with the avowed aims of Germany. On January 19 Dr. Goebbels stated that in Germany there was only one opinion about the English—'destroy them.' There was never a time, Dr. Goebbels had said, when Germany had such splendid prospects of achieving a dominating position in the world. There, said Mr. Chamberlain, you have the Nazi aims—destruction of this nation and domination of the world.

We, on the other hand, he continued, are fighting against the German domination of the world but we do not desire the destruction of any people. We are fighting to secure the small nations of Europe from the constant threat of aggression against their independence and from the extermination of their people. We are fighting to right the wrongs that Germany has inflicted on people who once were free. We are fighting for the freedom of individual conscience, for the freedom of religion and against persecution wherever it may be found. We are fighting to abolish the spirit of militarism and the accumulation of armaments which is pauperizing Europe, not least Germany herself. In concrete terms these aims must be secured first of all by restoring the independence of the Poles and the Czechs, by getting tangible pledges, which the present Government of Germany cannot give, that might shall no longer be right. For this purpose we and France are standing united, and shall continue to be united in purpose and policy after the war. We are resolved that freedom shall prevail.

In comparison with Mr. Chamberlain's speech a harangue by Hitler in a Munich beer cellar was a series of incoherent shrieks against the 'plutocrats' who had robbed Germany of her property, against 'the mind of the eternal Jew,' and in praise of himself as 'a magnet which, in passing over Germany, extracts the steel from her. All the real men who exist in Germany,' he shouted, 'are to be found in my camp.' Providence would not allow the German people to be ruined.

He believed it when he started his struggle twenty years ago. Now Germans would make their own the saying of a great German (Martin Luther): 'Even if the world were full of devils, we shall succeed.'

If Hitler lets loose this sort of harangue when he receives Mr. Sumner Welles an enlightening report may reach President Roosevelt. What Lord Halifax will say to the American envoy may perhaps be judged from his address, as Chancellor of Oxford University, to Oxford undergraduates. He told them it was natural that a younger generation should always think that their elders had made a mess of things. It is less natural that today the youth of one nation should repudiate the very foundations of human thought and action in which the youth of other nations believe. We have no choice but to resist and defeat by force the attack upon our ideals, those of our youth as of their elders, which is being made by what he called the 'devastating perversion' of youth in Germany. There has been a tendency, even outside Germany, Lord Halifax went on, to explain all history and humanity in economic instead of in human terms. The emphasis laid upon an ideal economic system, instead of the ideal individual, has not helped the development of human character. But now our youth has every right to ask: 'What is it that we are to fight for, and what prospect is there that we shall in the end secure the better world for which the fight is waged?' The answer must be that our policy rests on twin foundations of purpose—the determination to resist force, and recognition of the world's desire to get on with the constructive work of building peace. The future of humanity must not be left in the hands of those who would imprison and enslave it. In New Delhi, concluded Lord Halifax, 'stands a column on which are inscribed the words: "In Thought, Faith; In Word, Wisdom; In Deed, Courage; In Life, Service. So may India be great." None of us could offer for our country and our Commonwealth any better prayer today.'

I have summarized these four speeches because they seem to me to tell a story or, at any rate, to provide the background of the story which deeds of war are writing day by day and week by week. It is the story of a fight for human dignity and freedom against barbarism. This is the truth; and, to quote a greater than Martin Luther: 'The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.'

THE SUMNER WELLES MISSION

By March 8 the economic aspects of the war were becoming plainer. Holland was suffering from German submarine piracy and was running short of food. Five out of six German blockade runners were sunk or captured. Italy was seeking to buy British coal rather than run the risk of having her rolling-stock impounded by the Germans if she sent it to fetch coal from Germany. Yet Italy and other countries were buying raw materials in the United States at a rate far exceeding their normal requirements; and in the United States it was seen that these increases could not be explained by the needs of the buyers. They were evidently intended for Germany. These things, I said in my talk, would undoubtedly be noticed in the report of Mr. Sumner Welles, President Roosevelt's envoy, upon his impressions in Europe. My talk concluded:

Mr. Sumner Welles is now in Paris. He is expected to spend the week-end in London, then to return to Italy, meet Signor Mussolini once more, and sail for home. During his journeys he has lived up to his reputation of being able to hold his tongue in five languages. If German is one of those languages he will have been amused by Ribbentrop's refusal to talk English with him in Berlin. We remember Ribbentrop as the German Ambassador who, on reaching London and before presenting his letters of credence to the King, harangued British newspaper men in fluent English upon the awful danger which Great Britain would run if she had any truck with the Bolshevik 'scum of the earth.' Mr. Sumner Welles is, I understand, like most of his fellow-countrymen, addicted to the use of English. So it was necessary for Ribbentrop to remind him that any other language than the noble tongue of 'Aryan' Germans cannot aspire to the honour of being spoken officially by a true-born Nazi. Consequently an interpreter had to demean himself by conveying Ribbentrop's thoughts to President Roosevelt's envoy in the language of Abraham Lincoln.

If we do not know what Mr. Sumner Welles's impression may be we have heard rumours from Holland of the sort of thing Hitler is said to have said to him. According to the Berlin representative of a Dutch newspaper, Hitler sum-

marized his peace conditions under the following five points:

- (1) German control of the Czech country (Bohemia and Moravia), and of Poland, must be recognized as permanent.
- (2) England must cease her intrigues in Scandinavia.
- (3) The English pirate nests at Gibraltar, Malta and Singapore must disappear.
- (4) A German Monroe Doctrine must be proclaimed for Central Europe.
- (5) Germany's former colonies must be restored to her.

It is said that Mr. Sumner Welles looked 'very grave' after his interview with Hitler. I cannot imagine any civilized man looking particularly joyful after a talk with him. But I can imagine that a well-informed representative of the United States—a country with considerable interests in the peace and security of the Pacific Ocean—may have been a little taken aback by a proposal (if it was really made) that the British 'pirate nest' at Singapore should disappear. A reminder that Hitler really aims at the domination of the world could hardly have been better—or more tactlessly—given. As I said once before, I am heartily glad that Mr. Sumner Welles should have come to Europe. It is one thing to read reports about German designs. It is quite another thing to get knowledge of them straight from the Führer's mouth. So when Mr. Sumner Welles returns to Washington I have a notion that he will cease to hold his tongue, at any rate in one language. And that language will not be the dulcet native idiom of the highly-well-born embracer of the Bolshevik 'scum of the earth,' His Excellency Herr Joachim von Ribbentrop.

FINLAND GIVES IN

On March 12, 1940, Finland, exhausted in the unequal struggle with Soviet Russia, laid down her arms and made peace. Though this end to Finnish gallantry was seen to have been inevitable, especially in view of the refusal of Norway and Sweden to allow British and French forces to go to the help of Finland, it caused deep sorrow. France had prepared an expedition of 50,000 men, and Great Britain an almost equal force. They could not be sent unless the Finnish Government should ask for them. No request

from Finland had come—perhaps because she knew that this help could hardly have reached her unless Norway and Sweden had been willing to grant them passage. Large quantities of arms, ammunition and aircraft had been sent, and had enabled Finland to protract her struggle. Yet, at last, her troops on the Mannerheim Line were so exhausted for lack of sleep that they could no longer withstand the constant Russian attacks. When the 'Cease Fire' sounded along the front, the first exclamation of the worn-out Finnish soldiers was: 'Now we can sleep.'

Upon the wider effects of the Russo-Finnish war I said:

Up to the beginning of last November Russia held the whip hand of Germany. Germany needed Russia more than Russia needed Germany. While the struggle with Finland lasted this position was reversed. Russia became dependent on Germany, and had to appeal for German military advice and help. Now Russia may regain a freer hand; and, to that extent, Germany will be more dependent on Russia for supplies of raw materials, oil and foodstuffs. Whether this change will strengthen or weaken Russo-German co-operation is a riddle to which the answer is not yet clear.

After some account of a visit paid by Ribbentrop to Rome, where he had audience of the Pope and received a plain expression of Vatican disapproval of German misdeeds in Poland, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere—disapproval not mitigated by Ribbentrop's arrogance in taking with him to the Vatican a carload of Gestapo men and presenting them to the Pope—I mentioned the return of Mr. Sumner Welles to Italy after a lengthy visit to London and said:

In England Mr. Sumner Welles will certainly have found firm determination to continue the struggle until Hitlerism has been overthrown. Any criticism he may have heard from Opposition leaders will have been constructive criticism, prompted by a desire for a more vigorous prosecution of the war. An experienced foreign visitor who has of late been in contact with all classes of our people summed up his impression the other day in one word. That word was: 'Determination.'

In the third week of March a number of events were casting their

shadows before. Hitler and Mussolini had met in a snow-storm on the Brenner Pass. Rumours spread that a new German 'peace offensive' might soon begin. Suggestions that Mr. Sumner Welles had brought peace proposals with him from the United States were flatly denied by him in these words: 'I have not received any peace plan or proposals from any belligerent or from any other government. I have not conveyed any such proposals to any belligerent or to any other government; nor am I bringing back to the President any such proposals.'

Nevertheless Dr. Goebbels put out reports that Hitler had framed a German peace plan in 'eleven points.' His aim was to spread doubt and uneasiness among the Allies. As soon as he failed to do this Dr. Goebbels promptly repudiated his own reports. In the House of Commons Mr. Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister, brushed the rumours aside by saying that whatever might be the outcome of the Brenner meeting 'we are ready to meet it and are not likely to be diverted from the purpose for which we entered this war.'

In my talk I said:

The Prime Minister did, however, allude with warm approval to the broadcast address in which President Roosevelt defined last week the kind of peace that would be neither moral, intelligent nor lasting. This definition is felt to be all the more important because it is understood to have been framed after the President had received from Mr. Sumner Welles a preliminary report upon Mr. Welles's talk with Hitler in Berlin. So I will quote the definition of which every phase is a condemnation of Hitler. It ran:

'Today we seek a moral basis for peace. It cannot be a real peace if it fails to recognize brotherhood. It cannot be a lasting peace if the fruit of it is oppression, starvation, cruelty, or human life dominated by armed camps. It cannot be a sound peace if small nations live in fear of powerful neighbours. It cannot be a moral peace if freedom from invasion is denied to the small nations. It cannot be an intelligent peace if it denies free passage throughout the world to that knowledge of ideals which permits men to find common ground. It cannot be a righteous peace if the worship of God is denied.'

President Roosevelt has evidently made up his mind about the kind of peace he would like to come out of this war, and has told his people—albeit in negative form—what he thinks.

President Roosevelt's definition helped to steady neutral opinion which, especially in South-Eastern Europe, was growing doubtful whether Great Britain and France would or could win the war, and was wondering why the two Allies were not conducting the war more vigorously. In France, desire for greater vigour had led to the reconstruction of the Government. M. Paul Reynaud had taken the place of M. Daladier as Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, and had broadened the basis of his Administration by including in it three Socialist representatives and by forming a small War Cabinet. An analogous desire was felt in Great Britain. Of it I said:

The need for a re-casting of the British War Cabinet has been urged of late by all parties. In witty style, Commander Stephen King-Hall, a former naval officer who entered Parliament some months ago as a supporter of the Government, said last Tuesday in the House of Commons what many people are thinking. Alluding to the Prime Minister's seventy-first birthday, and to Mr. Winston Churchill's ample proportions, he advocated the formation of a War Cabinet possessed of 'drive and energy.' In the present Cabinet, he said, '... there is one battleship which, although laid down seventy-one years ago, has all the modern devices—the Prime Minister with a resolute grip on things—and one battle-cruiser which, although not exactly streamlined, delivers useful broadsides against the Nazis. They are surrounded', he went on, 'by drifters, trawlers, dredgers and other auxiliary vessels, all having a useful function to perform in the war but not designed by God or man to lie in the line of battle.'

So no surprise and much satisfaction would be felt if the Prime Minister should put a few more 'battle-cruisers' into the line and should release the 'drifters, trawlers and dredgers' for less arduous duties. The country has been and is looking for greater energy in the conduct of the war; and the loud applause with which the House of Commons greeted the news that our Air Force had taken swift reprisals for the German air raid on Scapa Flow and the killing of a civilian in the

Orkney Islands gives the measure of public feeling. Hitler has put his faith in the doctrine and the practice of force. The only doctrine that is likely to convince him and the German people that this faith is misplaced will be the efficient use of greater force until they cry: 'Hold, enough!'

By all accounts the sustained British air raid on the German aircraft base at Sylt was a very smart and effective piece of work. The military side of it I am not competent to judge, but one thing in particular strikes me about the moral or political side of it. Neither the German Supreme Command nor Dr. Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry could pretend that it had not taken place. So Dr. Goebbels tried to minimize its importance by calling it 'merely a piece of propaganda.' 'Merely' is hardly the right word. Yet I agree with Dr. Goebbels that, as 'propaganda,' the raid on Sylt was first-rate. The purpose of propaganda is to influence and to persuade the enemy. It is a mortal offence for any German to listen to the news or views conveyed by British wireless stations; and, in any event, the only sort of propaganda that is really worth while is propaganda that reflects and foreshadows a settled policy. This is exactly what the air raid on Sylt did. It made the Germans feel that we mean business, and that when we strike we strike hard and go on striking. The more of this kind of propaganda we can 'put over,' the sooner will the German people come to understand that the sort of peace Hitler wants is beyond their reach and that the kind of peace which President Roosevelt negatively defined is the peace we are determined to win and to maintain.

The Prime Minister got something like an ovation in the House of Commons last Tuesday night when he said, from his own standpoint, what I have been trying to say from the standpoint of an ordinary citizen. The Government and its composition had come in for a good deal of criticism during the debate upon our alleged failure to give adequate help to Finland. In self-defence Mr. Chamberlain made out a strong case on this issue. But the loudest applause of the House was reserved for his final declaration. He said there need be no anxiety lest he be in a hurry to accept peace terms that were not in conformity with those ideals of peace with which we started this war. He accepted the spirit of the words used by President Roosevelt as to what the peace should be. Up to the last moment, he added, he did his utmost to prevent war,

WORDS ON THE AIR

because he thought it might be possible to keep the peace without fighting. 'Now that I am in the struggle' he concluded, 'I shall be just as determined, just as persistent, in achieving the purpose we have in mind during the war as I was in striving to keep the peace before the war.' The House believed him, and cheered him to the echo.

I should like to cheer him too. Before the war I thought he was mistaken, and often criticized his belief that Hitler could be dealt with otherwise than by force. So I can say with a clear conscience that I think him right now.

A VISIT TO FRANCE

Before I gave my talk on March 29 I had accepted an invitation to address in Paris, Marseilles and other French cities large French audiences upon British aims in the war and upon our determination to cease fighting only when Nazi Germany should have been overthrown. It was thought expedient that Englishmen able to speak acceptable French should try to counteract mistaken views which the strict French censorship—of opinion as well as of news—and subterranean German propaganda had fostered in many quarters. An important Anglo-French declaration had been issued in London after a conference between M. Paul Reynaud, and several members of his inner War Cabinet, with the British War Cabinet and their military advisers. By this declaration the two Governments undertook neither to negotiate nor to conclude a armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement, nor to discuss peace terms before reaching identity of view on the conditions necessary to ensure to each of them an effective and lasting guarantee of their security. So in my talk I said:

There is a precedent for this declaration in the agreement signed by Great Britain, France and Russia soon after the outbreak of war in 1914 not to conclude any separate peace with enemy countries. But yesterday's declaration is far more important. It bars the way to intrigues that may be designed to divide France from Great Britain or Great Britain from France by proposing peace terms calculated to appeal to one ally rather than to the other. And it engages both countries to continue their common and concordant action for the creation

of a new international order that shall ensure the freedom of peoples now oppressed, together with respect for law and arrangements for the preservation of peace in future.

While it is true that these undertakings only repeat what British and French statesmen have already declared, they gain a special meaning by being jointly declared, and also from the circumstances of the moment. It may be taken for granted that governments do not agree upon and issue declarations of this kind without some very definite reasons; and it is the more satisfactory that this declaration should have been issued before enemy intrigues can do harm.

Three weeks hence, when I hope to resume these weekly talks on world affairs after a visit to France, I may have something to say upon the feelings of the French people. Though the French Chamber was not very kind to M. Reynaud when he presented his Government to it at the end of last week, he has since gained much fuller support; and the lifting of censorship upon expressions of political opinion in France should help to promote freer public discussion than has hitherto been possible. According to an acute and experienced British observer, Mr. Harold Nicolson, who has recently been in France, the French censorship was partly responsible for the fall of the Daladier Cabinet to which M. Reynaud's Cabinet has now succeeded. The conclusion of peace between Finland and Russia gave a severer shock to French opinion than it did to feeling in Great Britain because the censorship had prevented the French public from knowing how complicated and difficult Finland's position had become. So all the blame was thrown upon M. Daladier who felt compelled to resign. If M. Reynaud and his new Minister of Information, M. Frossard, now remove political censorship altogether, I think they will render a service to France and will also help to increase unanimity of thought and feeling on both sides of the Channel.

IMPRESSIONS OF FRANCE

In Paris I addressed a large audience at the Sorbonne and, later, a gathering of French trade unionists. At the Sorbonne the chair was taken by M. Camille Chautemps, the Minister of the Interior. I spoke therefore under official auspices. Other addresses

followed at Marseilles, Nice, Cannes, Toulon and Lyons. The Minister of Information took the chair for me at Lyons, and M. Edouard Herriot, the Mayor of Lyons and a former Prime Minister, was among my hearers. I had not been long in France when news came of the German invasion of Denmark and Norway on the morning of April 9. This new example of German aggression did not surprise the French though it obviously increased their sense of the gravity of the situation. They were delighted to learn that the British Navy and the R.A.F. had taken swift counter-action; and, though the news only came through after my return to London, the British naval victory at Narvik, where seven German destroyers were sunk by five British destroyers, aroused genuine enthusiasm.

Yet I detected in more than one quarter an undercurrent of dissatisfaction both with the conduct of the war by the French Government and with the measures taken to meet what might soon be a determined German offensive against Holland, Belgium and France. At Marseilles an old acquaintance, of Nationalist and Clerical views, murmured to me his conviction that things would not improve until the Government of France should be taken over by Marshal Pétain; and in Paris a French friend, who had been very steadfast during the war of 1914-18, assured me that the Reynaud Cabinet would soon be swept away by 'a tidal wave.' To my astonishment this friend presently joined the Vichy Government. Yet neither he nor my acquaintance at Marseilles gave any hint of half-heartedness in the prosecution of the war.

Nor did the behaviour of the many audiences I addressed give me any inkling of the catastrophic change that would take place barely a month later. When I spoke of the British determination to fight the war through to complete victory, no matter how long or how hard the struggle might be, my words were cheered to the echo. So, on resuming my broadcast talks after my return to London in mid-April, I said on April 19:

For the first time since the war began I have been in France. My object was not to go near the front or to visit the Maginot Line but to speak to and to talk with French people of all classes in half a dozen different places between Paris and the Mediterranean. During the last war I did the same kind of

thing; sometimes when, as in 1917, the French were rather down in the mouth and believed that Britain was not quite pulling her weight in the war. So I could compare French feeling then with French feeling today, and could judge pretty well, from the way French audiences took my very frank talk, how their feelings are moving beneath the surface.

I had been asked to go to France because French opinion was supposed to be a little doubtful about the war and about our part in it. It seemed to be hoped that I might be able to help in clearing up French doubts. But I knew the French too well to imagine that they would relish anything that smacked of British propaganda. So I undertook only to tell French audiences—from the standpoint of France no less than from that of Great Britain—what is at stake in this war, what we have to do to win it and how we must set about winning the peace for ourselves and others after the war. I proposed to speak with the utmost frankness, to show where we and the French had blundered badly in the past, to take stock of our present position and to survey the necessities of the future.

Though I knew that the French will stand a good deal of plain speaking, if they feel sure there is no malice about it, I was not prepared for the enthusiasm with which my frankness was everywhere received. The explanation, I found, was that since the beginning of the war the French censorship had frowned upon public discussion of international affairs in the press and elsewhere, and that rumours and gossip of all kinds had consequently had free play. German propaganda took full advantage of this lack of public ventilation. So when I threw open a few windows there was unmistakable delight. French feeling and opinion were solid enough. They only lacked an opportunity to express themselves.

In one well-known French city on the southern coast, where I spoke in a theatre, I found a group of French soldiers, ancient and modern, standing in the wings at the end of my talk and applauding with the greatest vigour. At Toulon, the Portsmouth of France, the joy of the people that units of the French Navy should be taking part in the operations off the Norwegian coast helped me to understand one side of Anglo-French co-operation that I had not before appreciated; and when the French Admiral in command of Toulon rushed on to the platform at the end of my talk, delivered an impas-

sioned harangue in a voice of thunder, and ended by nearly dislocating my wrist with the grip of an iron hand, I got a notion that we in England hardly gauge even yet the depths of French feeling.

This was before the news of the battle of Narvik had come through. What it was like after the battle of Narvik, and the news that British mines had been laid in the Baltic along the German coast as far as Memel, I can only imagine. But two extracts from the French press may serve as illustrations. The first is from the Paris *Temps*, a sedate French newspaper which is sometimes semi-official but is rarely given to enthusiasm. In a leading article entitled 'The Grandeur of Britain,' which it published last Monday evening, it said:

'The noteworthy exploits of the British Navy have finally killed the legend of German invincibility. They have killed also certain other legends which enemy propaganda has tirelessly sought to create for months past in the hope of disturbing Franco-British understanding and of shaking the confidence of free peoples in the will and the resolve of England. The lie of British decadence, and the other lie that England is making the French people fight to safeguard selfish English interests, are henceforth dead even in the eyes of the most ignorant. The British people is still what it was in the greatest hours of its history. It is fighting, like the French people, for a high ideal of freedom and justice, without sparing the blood of its children on land, sea and in the air, with a valour and a spirit of sacrifice to which all must pay homage. The grandeur of Britain is intact whereas that of Hitlerite Germany is dangerously stricken. . . . Britain and France, closely associated, the one mistress of the seas and the other wielding the surest military power in Europe; cannot be beaten. Their union, which surpasses in scope and in practical effect that of any entente or alliance, creates all the force that is needed to save the freedom and the civilization of the whole world.'

The second extract is from the comment of a French historian who, during the last war, drew up day by day the official military bulletins issued from French headquarters. Analysing as an expert the *communiqué* of the British Admiralty upon the naval battle of Narvik, he calls it one of the finest pieces of war literature ever written. Comparing it with the 'bad and grandiloquent literature' issued by the Nazi authorities he writes:

'In the British *communiqué*, on the contrary, one is impressed by the magnificent sense of powerful serenity conveyed by the spokesman of this British people, a people supremely confident within the solid framework of its free institutions. Really, we must recognize that our Allies are very likeable people.'

To sum up my impressions of France in a few words is not altogether easy. The people are firm as a rock. The press gives, on the whole, a very inadequate impression of the popular temper. I spoke to a gathering of French trade unionists and found them heart and soul behind the Allied cause, far more so than any French newspaper seems to realize. The administrative apparatus of the country is apt to be a trifle pedantic and heavy-handed, not caring overmuch whether civilians are subjected to inconvenience and discomfort which might be mitigated or avoided with a little more tact and common sense. In some ways one *feels* the war—in the form of discomfort—more generally in France than Great Britain. In other ways one feels it less. There are far more motor-cars in French streets than in British; and the black-out is more reasonably and more intelligently managed there than here. But it is among the politicians that the full gravity of the war appears to be less completely realized in France than it is in Britain. Had it not been for the British successes in Norway I am not sure that the French Chamber and the French Senate would have given M. Paul Reynaud's Government the whole-hearted support it needs. Yet, here again, a word of explanation is necessary. The great majority of politicians do not differ upon the object of the war or in the determination to carry it through at all costs until Nazi Germany is overthrown. They differ only upon the persons and the parties who should be entrusted with the waging of it. At moments I got the impression that some politicians are not fully aware of the suspicion and dislike with which anything in the shape of personal or party intrigue is regarded by the people as a whole. The only standard by which public men are judged among the common people is by their vigour and whole-heartedness in prosecuting the war with the utmost energy.

By April 26 British and French attention was concentrated on the behaviour of Italy. Mussolini's press had begun by publishing

only German accounts of Hitler's Norwegian adventure, and by ignoring British naval action. But the Vatican organ, *Osservatore Romano*, which was not under Fascist discipline, had increased its circulation tenfold by publishing the British as well as the German official bulletins. In consequence I noted that Mussolini's own press had begun to print some British as well as German news. I went on:

Hitler's Norwegian adventure, and his attempt to put the Norwegian traitor, Major Quisling, in charge of a Norwegian Government have put a number of neutral countries on their guard. In Yugoslavia there has been a great rounding up of the Nazi agents who had begun to swamp the country. The former pro-Nazi Prime Minister, Stoyadinovitch, with his former Home Secretary and Chief of Police have been packed off to isolated places in the interior of the country where 'topographical conditions' are said to make it difficult for them to escape. One hundred Germans have been expelled from Belgrade alone, and many others have been removed from other parts of the country. Similar precautions are being taken in Roumania, Switzerland and Holland, all of whom are keeping a sharp eye on possible 'Quislings' in their midst.

Nowhere is anxiety about Hitler's intentions greater than it is in Sweden. So far, her Government has refused to be intimidated, though Germany is making preparations that appear to point to an invasion of Sweden. The Swedish Government has rejected German demands to allow Swedish territory, or Swedish telephones or telegraphs, to be used by Germany in order to facilitate the subjugation of Norway. So the German press is abusing Sweden just as it abused Czechoslovakia and Poland before they were invaded.

What Hitler will do nobody can foresee. He may hold his hand for a while until he finds how the operations in Norway are going. One curious and unexpected result of his Norwegian adventure has been to put the Swedish Navy in the Baltic practically on a level with the German Navy. The German destroyer fleet has suffered irreparable mutilation at the hands of the British and French warships. Of the 26,000-ton battleships the *Gneisenau* was sunk by Norwegian coastal batteries, the *Scharnhorst* was knocked out of fighting shape by the *Renown*, and the pocket battleship *Scheer* was holed by two torpedoes from a British submarine. The cruisers

Blücher and *Karlsruhe* were sunk by Norwegian and British guns while a little Norwegian mine-layer sunk the *Emden*. So altogether the total weight of naval guns which Germany could now use against the Swedish Navy amounts to six 11-inch, eight 8-inch and seventeen 5.9-inch guns against the twelve 11-inch and twenty 6-inch guns of Sweden. In addition the Swedish coastal defences are much more heavily armed and are better supplied with ammunition than were those of Norway.

Whether Hitler can wait indefinitely is another matter. The iron mines he wants to get hold of are in northern Sweden, not in Norway; and for his operations in Norway the short sea passage between Copenhagen, the Danish capital, and Malmö, the Swedish port opposite to it, may be thought indispensable as a means of dodging British and French attacks upon German transports and supply ships. The Skagerrak, the belt of sea between northern Denmark and the southern Norwegian coast, is not altogether safe for German vessels. Apart from the constant attentions of British destroyers, aircraft and submarines, a French destroyer flotilla sank two German patrol ships there last week while a French submarine sank a 750-ton German submarine. But the seizure of Malmö would probably meet with Swedish resistance. And though the Swedes are not now looked upon as a people of soldiers, they used to be one of the foremost military nations in Europe. If Hitler stirs them up he may meet his match.

In conclusion, after referring to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget statement, and saying that the most serious criticism of it was that he did not ask us to pay enough, because our financial war effort ought to be bigger if we were to get on level terms with Germany, I added:

We don't enjoy the strain upon our purses, but we should enjoy much less the thought that we were not doing all we might do. Sometimes I feel a sort of unholy glee at the way in which this war has confounded the materially minded people who think that all the worth-whiles of life can be expressed in statistical tables, and everything be regulated by the economic laws of supply and demand. The only demand we recognize today is the demand of civilization itself for the overthrow

of Hitlerism and all its abominations, so that men may be free to think their own thoughts, speak their own minds, and live in fellowship as human beings, instead of being trained and ordered to shout 'One Folk! One Reich! One Führer!' while a Secret State Police bludgeons the silent into vociferation. This is the demand we are determined to supply; and Hitler won't like the supply when he gets it.

DISAPPOINTMENT

Ups and downs in Norway—especially the 'down' of the withdrawal of British Forces from southern Norway—and a reminder that the Western Front was after all the main theatre of the war, formed the chief themes of my talk on May 3. By way of counter-acting disappointment at the unfavourable news from Norway I said that those of us who went through the war of 1914-18 had an advantage over younger observers of this war, since we knew that in any struggle of large dimensions there must be 'downs' as well as 'ups,' and could take the 'downs' as something to be made good by greater effort. If, for the moment, the contest in Norway seemed more urgent and spectacular than the silent pressure and counter-pressure on the Western Front, we ought not to forget that the Western Front was of paramount importance.

Passing then to the possibility of early Italian intervention in the war, I said that an extension of the conflict to South-Eastern Europe must add to the anxieties of smaller nations who would not be entirely reassured even if Russia were to oppose German operations in the Balkans or elsewhere. I added:

All in all, and looking at the present position with the compensating advantage of experience in the war of 1914-18, I, for one, am not disposed to be mournful. We have had a 'down' in southern Norway on land, just as we had a very decided 'up' in our operations by sea and in the air against the German invading forces. In comparison with the 'downs' we experienced before the battle of the Marne in September 1914, by the failure of the Franco-British spring offensive in 1915, by the disappointments that attended the first and second battles of the Somme in 1916, by the breakdown of the French spring offensive and of the British autumn offensive

in 1917, by Ludendorff's break-through the British lines in March 1918, up to the triumphant Allied offensive in July and August of that year, the present setback in Norway appears to me almost trifling. We shall have other ups and other downs, for the enemy, who is striving to destroy civilization itself, is very powerful, not unskilful and very determined. His infamous system is fighting for its life. We are fighting for our lives—and for something better—the freedom of humanity itself. And this is the fight that we are going to win.

A NATIONAL ASSIZE

My talk on May 10 had been written but not given when news came of the German invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg that morning. Until then the outstanding event of the week had been a debate in the House of Commons upon the conduct of the war. I dealt first with the German offensive, and then described the House of Commons debate as a national assize upon the shortcomings of the Chamberlain Administration:

The German invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg has thrown into the shade, without entirely obscuring, what was until this morning the main event of the past week. This event was the debate that took place in the House of Commons on Tuesday and Wednesday upon the conduct of the war. Its outcome, unexpected by Mr. Chamberlain's Administration, was a vote in which the Government majority fell so low that a change is felt on all hands to be indispensable. The change may, indeed, be announced at any moment.

To the debate and its outcome I shall presently revert. They lie in the background of the situation, and they mean one thing only—the utter determination of the British people that the war shall henceforth be waged with every ounce of effort and every resource that Great Britain and the British Commonwealth of Nations can command. But in the foreground stands the by no means unexpected, though not for that reason less villainous, assault of Hitler's forces upon three more neutral countries. During the week rumours had spread that German armies were marching towards the Dutch frontier. They were of course denied in Berlin; and in some quarters they were

thought to be merely another phase of the 'war of nerves' by which Hitler has sought to break the spirit of resistance in Holland and Belgium. But the Dutch and the Belgian Governments were forewarned and, as far as possible, forearmed. Though they had pushed neutrality to the point of not making even hypothetical arrangements with Great Britain and France for help in the event of attack, they knew that Great Britain and France had prepared plans and assembled forces to help them in withstanding a German onslaught. These plans are already being carried out.

One of the cardinal points of British policy has for centuries been the defence of the Low Countries, as Holland and Belgium are sometimes called. In the last war this policy was often termed 'the safety of the Narrow Seas.' It was for this reason that Great Britain guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium by the Treaty of 1839—a treaty which Prussia signed and the German Empire afterwards ratified as involving an individual, not a collective, obligation on the part of each of its signatories. It was because Germany violated this obligation by invading Belgium in August 1914 that Great Britain declared war on Germany to uphold the validity of what the German Chancellor called 'a scrap of paper.' More recently, when Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was Prime Minister of our first National Administration, he issued and initialled a State Paper, in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee on Imperial Defence, declaring that the defence of the Low Countries still formed and would always form an essential part of British policy.

Yet, since that declaration was issued, neither Holland nor Belgium has been a party to any British or French plans or arrangements to uphold the security of the Low Countries. They have remained absolutely neutral. Indeed an embarrassing situation might have arisen if Germany had attacked Holland without attacking Belgium, for Allied forces could most easily and quickly be sent to the help of Holland through Belgian territory. Had Germany respected Belgian neutrality now, while attacking Holland, Great Britain and France might have had to choose between a violation of Belgian neutrality in order to help Holland, and the more difficult and dangerous operation of sending forces to Holland by sea. Hitler's onslaught on both the Low Countries at once has, to this extent, eased the Allied position.

Speaking personally, as an old student of international affairs in general, and of Pan-Germanism in particular, I cannot say that this German attack is in any way surprising. For nearly half a century Pan-German designs have been known to every careful observer of the European situation. They lay behind the war of 1914 which Germany intended to be a first stage in her conquest of the mastery of the world. This was why she then broke the treaty by which she had guaranteed Belgian neutrality, and rushed through Belgium in the hope of taking Paris and crushing France before any effective British help could be given to the French. She lost that gamble; but as soon as she had recovered in part from the consequences of her defeat in 1918, the old Pan-German aspirations were cherished again until they found their representative and mouthpiece in Adolf Hitler. Shortly after Hitler attained power in January 1933 a book was published by a certain Professor Banse, who represented the school of thought to which Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Hess, and Hitler himself belonged. In its final chapter 'The Lesson of the World War' it gave the following list of countries which should form what it called 'the proper territory of a true "Third Reich."' This territory embraced the German Empire, Austria, Danzig, Luxemburg, Holland (with her East Indian Colonies) and Liechtenstein, as 'purely German States.' It included also what it described as 'the German portions of other countries, namely, German Belgium, German Switzerland, German France (with Flanders, Alsace and Lorraine), German Italy, German Yugoslavia, German Czechoslovakia (with Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia), German Poland, German Lithuania and German Denmark.

There was thus no excuse for any foreign statesman not to know what Hitler's designs would be so soon as he thought he had the power to carry them out. Last year, after the absorption of Austria and Czechoslovakia (which were part of them), he believed he had the power. Now he is trying to prove it. Once again we, the French and our Allies—among whom Holland and Belgium must now be reckoned—shall prove him wrong.

It is unlikely, to say the least, that Hitler will have struck this blow without the intention of striking other blows in other directions either with his own forces or with those of allies upon whom he thinks he can count. The area of the war

may extend very rapidly; or, if Hitler should suffer a setback in his present onslaught, some of his potential helpers may think prudence the better part of valour. The struggle of influences, for and against intervention in the war, that has been going on in Italy for some weeks past may or may not have been won by the partisans of peace, among whom the Pope must be reckoned. We do not know, but we are prepared for any eventuality. And the impending formation of a truly National Government in Great Britain means that we shall face whatever emergencies may arise as a united people determined on victory.

This brings me back to the debate in the House of Commons last Tuesday and Wednesday. I ought perhaps to say that I shall speak of it from a strictly non-party, and equally non-official, standpoint. I have never belonged to any party. My standpoint is that of a man who lived and worked abroad too long to have been able to identify himself with any political school at home, and whose work obliged him to see England, or 'Britain,' whole. As long as any government faithfully serves England, or 'Britain,' or the British Commonwealth and the free institutions which are its life-blood, I care not a rap whether that Government call itself Conservative, Liberal, Labour, or 'National.'

One fact emerged from the debate. It was that in the opinion of two hundred members of Parliament, out of the 481 who voted, Mr. Neville Chamberlain's administration had not conducted the war with the foresight, energy and purposefulness that the highest national interests imperatively demand. So strong was this opinion that forty-four of the usual supporters of the Government voted against it, while a certain number, some sixty-five in all, abstained from voting. The Government had normally held a majority of more than two hundred members in this House of Commons. When all allowances are made for members absent on sick leave or serving with the forces, it is remarkable that the Government majority should have fallen so low as eighty-one.

What is the explanation? Was this result due solely to disappointment at the evacuation of southern and central Norway by the British and French Expeditionary Forces? Was it a consequence of the attack delivered by that very gallant sailor, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Roger Keyes, the hero of the naval raid on Zeebrugge in the last war? Or were

members moved by a feeling akin to that expressed by Mr. Amery, a former First Lord of the Admiralty and Secretary of State for the Dominions, who, in Cromwell's words, told Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues: 'You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go'? Or was there truth in Mr. Duff Cooper's warning to his fellow members that if they allowed themselves to be carried away even by Mr. Winston Churchill's eloquence and personality 'they would be unrepresentative of the mood of their constituencies and unworthy to represent their fellow countrymen'?

Looking upon the military and naval aspects of the Norwegian campaign and the decision to withdraw the Anglo-French Expeditionary Force, I am under the impression, as a layman and an outsider, that the spokesmen of the Government made out a strong case for themselves. Had nothing else been at issue in the debate I think the Government would have got a far bigger majority. Something else was evidently at stake; for a British House of Commons does not usually turn against an Administration because the fortune of war has been adverse in one particular instance. It did not turn against the Asquith Administration in the last war because of any single one of the military reverses our arms had suffered in 1915 and 1916. The Lloyd George Administration could never have been formed in December 1916 if the country and Parliament had not felt that greater efficiency and more drive were needed both at home and in the conduct of military operations.

There are, undoubtedly, the beginnings of a similar feeling in the country today; and the House of Commons debate expressed them. They do not arise solely from the evacuation of central and southern Norway, which served to bring to a head the determination that all speeches revealed to pursue the war more vigorously. Even in Mr. Winston Churchill's final defence of the Government there was an admission that not all had been well in past years. He alluded to his own persistent efforts from 1934 onwards to awaken the Baldwin and the Chamberlain National Administrations to the danger of allowing Germany to gain superiority in the air. 'Why,' said Mr. Churchill, 'is it asked whether the next blow is not going to be struck by Britain? The reason for this serious disadvantage of our not having the initiative is one which

cannot speedily be removed, and the reason is our failure in the last five years to maintain or regain air parity in numbers with Germany. The fact of our numerical deficiency in the air, in spite of our superiority in quality both of men and material, has condemned us, and will condemn us for some time to come, to a great deal of difficulty and suffering and danger which we must endure with firmness until more favourable conditions can be established—as assuredly they will be.’

Unless my non-party interpretation of the inner meaning of the House of Commons debate is wide of the mark, the comparative reverse which the Government suffered was due rather to general reflections upon past shortcomings of the National Administration than to the setback suffered in the Norwegian campaign. Otherwise the clear demonstration by Government speakers, including the Prime Minister, Sir Samuel Hoare and Mr. Winston Churchill, that we had dealt the enemy in Norway far heavier blows and inflicted upon him far heavier losses than he had dealt or inflicted upon us, would have carried more weight and might have changed the feeling of the House. I look upon the debate as having been a sort of assize, held by the representatives of the nation in Parliament assembled, upon the conduct of the war and the antecedents of the war by present Ministers; and as an expression of this country’s determination to leave nothing undone in future that may more fully correspond to its own settled resolve to win victory at all costs over the foes of human freedom.

I see that a leading journal of New York has written that to debate outspokenly the conduct of a campaign while the enemy threatens to renew his attack at any moment ‘is a magnificent exhibition of democracy, but it is not war.’ If this journal knew more of the temper of the British people and of the working of British institutions it would have written, on the contrary, that the House of Commons debate was war, precisely because it was a magnificent exhibition of democracy. Sometimes it is well to learn even from the enemy; and this week, for once in a way, Hitler’s press has told the truth. ‘Britain is awake,’ it exclaimed. Britain is awake and the British people will not sleep until the Nazi system, with its plans for Pan-German mastery of Europe and of the world, has been swept from the face of the earth.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISASTER—AND FAITH

May to June 1940

By mid-May 1940, it had become clear that a mighty German offensive had begun in the West and that the enemy had opened it with terrific momentum. None could guess how it would proceed or where it could be stopped. In my talk on May 17 I said:

At a moment of crisis and strain such as this, when the battle for and against the survival of civilization has been joined in Belgium and North-Eastern France, when Holland has gone down under the hammer blows of Hitler's Germany, it is particularly necessary, even if it be difficult, to take long views and to measure probabilities with clear eyes and cool minds. This I shall try to do today.

The first question that arises is why Hitler has chosen to strike with all his force, to put forth what may well be his supreme effort at this moment and in this place. We do not know the full answer to this question. We can only guess at it, more or less accurately, in the light of what we do know. Last week a German writer who has been for some years one of Hitler's shrewdest and most determined opponents expressed the belief that the internal situation within Germany would not allow Hitler to stand still, and that it was the pressure of this situation which would compel him to seek swift decisions. This he wrote before the invasion of Holland and Belgium. For reasons different from those given by this German writer I, too, have thought for some time that Hitler would be unlikely to wait, and that we should be in the thick

of the fight against him by the early summer at latest. Indeed, all the evidence from private and diplomatic sources during the past few weeks has suggested that Hitler and his generals would stake everything upon a great summer offensive against the Allies.

It should be remembered that Hitler does not invariably tell falsehoods. Sometimes he deliberately speaks the truth. When he does so his object is either to deceive or to frighten those whom he talks to. There is, for instance, good reason to believe that he told President Roosevelt's special envoy, Mr. Sumner Welles, of his determination to smash the Allies this summer. Certainly he laid much more than an outline of his plans, and of his reasons for feeling sure of success, before Signor Mussolini when they met on the Brenner Pass some weeks ago. What is more, he appears to have convinced the Italian Dictator. Ribbentrop, for his part, told the Pope, during the famous audience from which Ribbentrop emerged in a state of physical exhaustion, that the Allies would before long be 'brought to their knees.' All this evidence points to a feeling in Hitler's mind that he is now at the zenith of his power, that he cannot wait, and that he must risk everything in a giant gamble.

Why did he reach this conclusion? As long ago as June last year he had worked out his plans for a rapid invasion of Poland, and also for a simultaneous peace offensive in the west which, he believed, would induce Great Britain and France to acquiesce in his mastery of Central and South-Eastern Europe. These plans came to my knowledge last July; and I imagine that the British Government were also acquainted with them. Hitler carried them out exactly, save for the minor changes required by his agreement with Soviet Russia after its conclusion towards the end of August. He invaded and smashed Poland while he started a great peace offensive designed to influence Great Britain and France; and, as foreshadowed in his June plan, he utilized the good offices of the unsuspecting Queen of Holland and the King of the Belgians for the purpose. Simultaneously he worked his propaganda machine at high pressure—and not without success, as the utterances of certain British and French public men go to prove. Nevertheless the 'peace offensive' failed. France declined to believe that Great Britain alone was dragging her into war, and the British people responded by

demanding a more energetic prosecution of the war. Then Hitler began to realize that he could only hope to win the war by fighting, and by fighting soon.

The exceptionally long and hard winter, and the privations which the Allied blockade began to inflict upon a German people already severely rationed in preparation for war, made Hitler feel that he could hardly afford to face another winter without some tangible prospect of complete triumph. Otherwise, time might have appeared to be on his side. Many observers thought he would try to build up a strong and almost invulnerable economic position by pressure upon Central and South-Eastern Europe, and to leave the Allies to bear the growing strain of war expenditure and to face the formidable military problem of attacking the Siegfried Line. These observers thought he would play for a stalemate in the west as a means of wearing down Allied patience, and of depleting Allied financial reserves, while his U-boats and his magnetic mines should seriously hamper British supplies from overseas.

If these expectations proved mistaken the reason may lie partly in the failure of his U-boat campaign and of his magnetic mines, and partly in the feeling that the German people are far less united in their support of him and of his war than they were in support of their Imperial Government during the first three years, at least, of the war of 1914. We must remember that in the Germany of 1914 there were no concentration camps filled with scores, perhaps hundreds, of thousands of the Kaiser's bitter opponents. In Hitler's Germany these camps—in which every variety of torture that perverted ingenuity can discover or bestiality can practise is systematically used—are filled to overflowing; and Hitler's victims have relatives throughout the country who may suffer and groan in hopeless silence but who can certainly not be counted as ardent supporters of his rule. Some good judges reckon these irreconcilable opponents at 30 per cent of the German population. To them must be added a probably larger percentage of Germans who support Hitler without conviction, who approve, indeed, of his designs for the expansion of Germany, but who are by no means convinced of his ultimate success. To keep his hold upon these secret doubters Hitler needs to gain triumph after triumph. And, even then, most of the doubters are old enough to remember that until

the late summer of 1918 Imperial Germany held the whole of Poland, large portions of Russia, practically the whole of South-Eastern Europe, besides Belgium and North-Eastern France to within seventy-five miles of Paris. Nor can they forget that despite these tangible gains, Imperial Germany collapsed in the autumn of 1918 and had to sue for peace, while her gains melted away like snow in the spring sunshine. We, for our part, must not exaggerate the immediate effect of these memories and of these doubts. On the surface the unity of Hitler's Germany is unbroken. Yet it is because Hitler knows that this unity would be shaken by tangible evidence of failure that he has begun this great offensive and is striving with might and main for swift victory. As the French Prime Minister, M. Paul Reynaud, said to the French Chamber on Thursday, 'Hitler wants to win the war in two months. If he fails he is doomed, and he knows it. That is why, after long hesitation, after affirming that he would let the war mature slowly, he has taken a chance. We are perfectly aware of the danger. We know that the days, weeks and months to come will forge future centuries. This peril we face unitedly.'

It is to the youth of Germany that Hitler must look for unwavering, fanatical support, to the young men and women whom he has trained in Nazism, whom he has kept in ignorance of all else, and whom he has taught to look upon himself as a heaven-sent saviour with semi-divine attributes. With these young men he has filled his armies, while his propaganda organization has worked to undermine the resistance of neighbouring countries—Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and Switzerland—to his designs so that treachery from within might facilitate assault from without. Neither this propaganda organization nor the 'Fifth Column' activities connected with it could be left too long unutilized without danger of discovery. Similarly there was a prospect that part, at least, of his immense reserves of aircraft and tanks would either become obsolete or be offset by Allied counter-preparations if he waited too long. So, on balance, Hitler may have felt that he must strike without delay before the Allied blockade should seriously restrict his resources, and before the preparations of Great Britain and France should neutralize his own.

The weight of his mechanized army, and the fury of its attack, are being felt by the British, French and Belgian

armies at this moment, as they were by the Dutch army a week ago. When a 'mechanized Attila,' as M. Léon Blum, the former French Prime Minister, has called Hitler, launches an attack regardless of its cost in human lives, he is bound to score initial successes. What remains to be seen is whether the weight and the fury of the attack can be maintained long enough to turn initial successes into solid advantage. Since the German offensive began I have had occasion to discuss this very matter with an experienced German officer who fought against us in the last war. His knowledge of the German rank and file, and his experience on the battle-field when heavy losses have been sustained, made him believe that Hitler will be unable to keep up the pressure longer than a few weeks at most. At the same time he believed that before this battle ends Hitler will either seek to strike similar blows elsewhere—perhaps against Switzerland—or to bring his Italian ally into action on his side. All reports from Switzerland suggest that the Swiss have prepared their army to meet such a blow; while the balance of reports from Italy appear to indicate that Mussolini would not be unwilling to answer Hitler's call at a favourable moment. Should Hitler's offensive be checked, or should it score only partial success, prudence would seem to counsel a continuance of the Fascist policy of non-belligerent watchful waiting. It need hardly be said that we and France are prepared in the Mediterranean for any decision Italy may take, and the same is true of Egypt.

In some quarters which ought to be well-informed it is believed that Mussolini waited for Hitler to begin the offensive against Holland and Belgium so that large British and French forces might be engaged there, and the task of Italy be correspondingly lightened, should she decide to intervene against the Allies. But in the meantime there has come the appeal of President Roosevelt to Mussolini. Though its terms are not exactly known, the substance of the appeal is certainly designed to increase any doubt Mussolini may feel upon the expediency of entering the war. Taken in conjunction with the President's address to Congress, and with its pointed reference to the short-sightedness of allowing there to be any delay in the delivery of American aeroplanes to the Allies, the fact that President Roosevelt has appealed to Italy at this moment seems to strengthen the conclusion that the decision

of Italy might depend upon the provisional outcome of the great battle which is now being fought.

I say 'the provisional outcome.' Of the ultimate outcome there is no doubt whatever, either in my own mind or in those of the more competent men whom I have consulted. I think we need to take very literally the words of Mr. Winston Churchill's opening statement to the House of Commons, as Prime Minister, on Monday last. 'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat' he said; and he went on: 'Our policy is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us, and to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. . . . I take up my task with buoyancy and hope, and I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. At this time I feel entitled to claim the aid of all, and I say: "Come then, let us go forward together with our united strength."'

We are going forward together. Our people at home, the British peoples oversea, the French and our other Allies. And we are sure, like Mr. Winston Churchill, that our cause will not fail.

A NOTABLE WEEK

During the week before I spoke again on May 24 a new British National Government under Mr. Winston Churchill had been formed, the resistance of Holland had been broken, the Queen of Holland with her family and the Dutch Government had taken refuge in England, the Norwegian gold reserve had also been brought to London though the King of Norway and his Government were still on Norwegian territory, M. Reynaud's Cabinet in France had been reconstructed, with Marshal Pétain as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State, the French line of defence on the Meuse had been broken between Sedan and Namur, General Weygand had replaced General Gamelin as the Allied Commander-in-Chief, and the Germans, reaching the sea near Abbeville, had driven a wedge between the British and French Forces.

In these conditions my talk on May 24 began:

We have had the first really big week of the war. There may be other big, or bigger, weeks to follow. In point of fact one can hardly reckon time by days or weeks or months when things suddenly reach what looks like a climax, and then a higher climax before one can take stock of what has happened. Yet, whatever may befall, I think that this past week will stand out in our memories, and perhaps in the history of the world, as having been truly notable.

To begin at the end let me say that our people are in fine fettle, tails up, thumbs up, and ready for anything. At last we have got the sort of Government we have been longing for, a Government that has got a move on, that has told us not to look upon our lives or our belongings as our own but to put them all unreservedly in the service of our country and our cause at the word of command. I can't remember anything that has given our people such genuine delight since the war began as the Act which Parliament passed in 150 minutes last Wednesday, empowering the Government to require all persons 'to place themselves, their services and their property at the disposal of His Majesty.' Our people have meant business all along. Now we know that our new Ministers mean business too. More power to their elbows!

Before this was done I think that most of us had been searching our hearts, individually, on our own account. The German drive towards the Channel ports made us all sit up and take notice. What were we going to do, as individuals, if Hitler should try to invade or otherwise to destroy England and Britain? Should we seek some sort of wretched safety somewhere, and think of our own precious skins, or should we behave like the devoted men and women at the front or, still better, like those splendid boys of the R.A.F., thinking only how best we can give Hitler better than he sends. It didn't take us long to make up our minds. We are all out to smash Hitler and to save the world; and if our lives can help to smash him and to save the world they shall be gladly given.

I must say that we now have tip-top leadership. One is sometimes tempted to think that words don't count, and that the gift of verbal expression is a minor talent. But surely it is a great piece of luck, to put it mildly, that our new National Prime Minister should be at once a fighter and a writer, a man of action and a man of apt speech, who can say exactly what we are feeling because he feels as we do. Mr. Winston

Churchill's radio message to the nation and to the world last Sunday night was something more than right words uttered at the right time. It was a great deed done by the right man in the right place, and done as only a man of genius could do it. What we liked best, because we knew it to be true, was when he said:

'There will be many men and women in this island who, when the ordeal comes upon them, as come it will, will feel a comfort, and even a pride, that they are sharing the peril of our lads at the front—soldiers, sailors, and airmen, God bless them—and are drawing away from them a part at least of the onslaught they have to bear.'

So heartened are we by this chance of proving our own worth that we have dropped—or postponed to a more convenient season—all recriminations, and even the well-warranted question why we had to wait till the fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour for the national leadership we now enjoy. The combination of labour and trade union leaders in the Government with vigorous men of all other parties is a guarantee that when workers on munitions, arms, aircraft and other supplies are called upon to work, in shifts, twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, there will be no holding back because we are all in the same boat and must sink or swim with it. The time for readjustment and for the restoration of individual rights will come after victory. Till then our only task is and will be to fight and to work ceaselessly for victory.

By this time, too, our people have a clearer notion of what it is they are fighting against. In past years they have heard, with some degree of unbelief because they thought what they heard might be exaggerated, of the appalling horrors systematically practised in Nazi concentration camps. Now our own men in the field and sailors afloat tell them of the bombing and machine-gunning of helpless fugitives from Nazi frightfulness in Holland and Belgium, of the attacks on hospital ships and ambulances, and of the spraying of bullets from aircraft even upon the wounded. These deliberate abominations are now certified beyond any shadow of doubt. Yet it is only in the last few days that an idea of what is in store for any people that comes under Nazi control has been brought home to British minds.

On the morrow of the surrender of Holland the German Command stated that the lives and the property of Dutch

citizens would be respected and protected if all opposition should cease—but that Holland would henceforth be subject to the German penal code.

What the German penal code might be they were not exactly told. Last Monday it was made clear. A new German penal decree was issued on that day to extend the provisions of earlier decrees against 'crimes and misdemeanours,' committed within Germany, to all 'crimes and misdemeanours' committed outside the Nazi Reich by Germans living abroad and by all foreigners. This decree declares that 'malicious or agitatorial utterances against leading persons of the Nazi State or the Nazi Party' constitute an offence punishable by German special courts from whose sentence there can be no appeal. And this decree applies to the past as well as to the present and future. 'Therefore all foreigners, whether in countries under German occupation or in countries at war with Germany or even neutral, who have spoken in the past or who may in future speak, write or reproduce 'utterances against the Führer [Hitler] or members of the Nazi Party at any time' are liable to penalties, including the death penalty by beheading, which special German courts may inflict upon them.

It is appalling to think of what may befall millions of innocent Czechoslovaks, Poles, Norwegians, Dutch and Belgians, whose lives are now at the mercy of German special courts, and may be forfeited upon a denunciation by the German Gestapo of anything they may have said or written, or be alleged to have said or written, even before their countries were overrun. There is hardly a public man or writer in Great Britain and France whose life would not be forfeit under this abominable penal code. Of the 'evil things' against which we fight, and which we are determined to crush, none is more evil than this.

So it is war to the death against German Nazism, its leaders and its supporters. During the past week war has come very near to us. The German success in breaking through the French lines on the river Meuse last week-end, and in blasting and bombing a way to Arras and Amiens by Tuesday, brought the spearhead of the German thrust to points less than a hundred miles from our southern coasts. It would not be true were I to say that the revelation of this danger in the speech of the French Prime Minister, M. Paul Reynaud, to

the French Senate on Tuesday left us unmoved. We were moved. We were not frightened. We set our teeth and steeled our resolve. Then came the appointment of General Weygand to be French Commander-in-Chief and the inclusion of the veteran hero of Verdun, Marshal Pétain, in the French Government. A distorted version of M. Paul Reynaud's words to the Senate spread doubt in some quarters whether the position of France might not be desperate. He was reported to have said that 'only a miracle could save France.' Not until later did our people know that he had said the exact contrary. After thanking—I am quoting his words—'the admirable Royal Air Force for the total help which it is giving to France both by its action on the field of the battle and against the sources of the enemy's supplies,' the French Prime Minister said: 'These two great peoples, these two Empires united as one, cannot be beaten. France cannot die. As for me, if some half-hearted wight should tell me tomorrow that only a miracle could save France, I should reply: "I believe in miracles because I believe in France."' And M. Reynaud followed up these words by making known on Wednesday the conviction of General Weygand after a first survey of the battle front. 'I am full of confidence, if everyone does his duty with fierce energy. . . . If we hold out one month—and we shall hold out as long as need be—we shall have gone three-quarters of the way to victory.'

At moments of crisis and danger such as those through which we have lived during the past week, and are still living in at this hour, it is easier to be calm and self-possessed than to escape from the pressure of circumstances and to take stock of less immediate realities. Yet we may find comfort and strength in turning our thoughts for an instant away from the battle-field, and from dangers that may threaten us at home, to the larger dimensions of our struggle and to the resources, moral as well as material, at our service. The magnificent effort of Canada, the growing cohesion of South Africa after the Nazi invasion of Holland, the splendid unity of the Australian Commonwealth and its people, the devotion of New Zealand and of Newfoundland, the marked sympathies of the manifold peoples of India with the Allied cause and—though this belongs to another category—the decision of the United States swiftly to raise its output of aircraft for the Allies, all go to prove the growing solidarity of civilized

peoples in the resolve to save the freedom without which 'civilization' must ever be a vain word.

As my eye ranges, in imagination, round the world I see cause for abundant comfort and hope, nay, for sure and certain faith that the evil men and the evil things will be utterly undone. We, in the regions of Belgium that are still unconquered, in Northern France and in these British Isles, have only to hold on, to hit back, to spare neither effort nor sacrifice, in order to gain time for the moral and material forces of free civilization to make their weight fully felt.

We shall hold on, whatever turn the present battle may take. We are hitting back. Already the Germans are feeling, far in the interior of their own stronghold of mechanized barbarism, the power and the shrewdness of our blows. That power and that shrewdness they will feel increasingly until their faith in their hell-sent Führer and his devilish system wavers and breaks.

KING LEOPOLD CAPITULATES

In the next few days the situation grew graver and graver. German ruthlessness in the Netherlands culminated in the deliberate destruction of Rotterdam where the entire centre of the city was pulverized by bombing, and tens of thousands of civilians were killed. On May 28 King Leopold of the Belgians capitulated to the enemy with the bulk of his army, thus placing the British and French forces between Dunkirk and Boulogne in a position of extreme danger. The prospect appeared to be that these forces would be surrounded and perhaps captured. Nevertheless I said on May 30:

At no moment since the war began have I felt so confident of victory as I feel today. However rash this affirmation may seem in the light of events during the past week, and in view of the prospect held out by the Prime Minister in Parliament on Tuesday that we may yet receive 'hard and heavy tidings,' I make it deliberately after such reflection as I am capable of. The reasons for this confidence, which is not based on 'wishful thinking,' I shall try to give. They may or may not strike others as convincing or conclusive. To me and, I think, to

the great majority of those with enough experience and knowledge calmly to assess the value of the factors that tell in our favour, as well as those that have told against us, they seem overwhelming.

Let me say at once that I hold no official position, speak from no official brief nor under any kind of official inspiration. My standpoint is that of an Englishman who knows his own people, who has seen something of the British Commonwealth and of the United States, and who has lived and worked for many years in German-speaking countries as well as in France and Italy. No man's judgment is infallible. Yet before and during the war of 1914-18, and since the advent of Hitler to power in Germany, events have too often borne out the forecasts which I have written and published for me to doubt the soundness of my judgment today.

The uppermost feeling in my mind is that during the terrific and epic struggle that has been going on in Belgium and Northern France since May 10 Hitler has lost far more than he has gained. Military experts may or may not share this feeling; though I know that an experienced German officer, who fought against us in the last war and was afterwards driven from his country for having opposed Hitler tooth and nail, believes that Hitler has already missed his best chance. By this time the Germans have lost well over 2,500 of their first-line aeroplanes together with pilots and crews. Thanks to the almost miraculous gallantry and skill of the Royal Air Force, and to the equal gallantry of French air squadrons, the vast numerical superiority which the Germans possessed at the beginning of the war has been steadily reduced, and a sense of moral inferiority instilled into German airmen.

Even more telling in their effect upon future German offensives have been the losses of German tanks and other armoured vehicles. According to my information Hitler has already lost more than one-third of the fleet of tanks with which he entered the war. No fewer than 2,000 of them, and perhaps more, have been knocked out; and tanks cannot be replaced so swiftly or so easily as aircraft. More important still are the lessons which we, and particularly the French, have learned from the tactical use of tanks by the German army. These lessons are being taken to heart, as the striking victories of French over German tank formations in the past

few days clearly indicate. These lessons sadly needed to be learned, just as the consolidation of French defences on the rivers Somme and Aisne suggest that the French may have taken to heart the terrible lesson of the German breakthrough on the Meuse, which turned the flank of the British Expeditionary Force and of the Belgian army and compelled them to fall back.

If it was natural that the order to fall back, in consequence of the heavy blow the French had suffered, should have disappointed the British army when it was more than holding its own against superior enemy forces, the sequel to the withdrawal has abundantly proved that neither the British nor the French divisions, which were thus separated from the main French army, allowed misfortune to affect their spirit or their fighting efficiency. When the full story is known of what has now become one of the most heroic rearguard actions in the whole history of war, it will prove the sober truth of the King's message to the British Commander-in-Chief. 'Placed by circumstances outside their control in a position of extreme difficulty,' the King's message said, 'they [the British Expeditionary Force] are displaying a gallantry that has never been surpassed in the annals of the British Army.'

The King's message, it should be remembered, was sent after the British Expeditionary Force had withstood the equally unexpected and not less dangerous blow which the capitulation of the King of the Belgians inflicted on it in the early hours of last Tuesday morning. Our Ministers, and others in responsible positions, admit the wisdom, and even the justice, of Mr. Winston Churchill's suggestion to the House of Commons on Tuesday afternoon that we should not 'attempt at this moment to pass judgment on the action of the King of the Belgians in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the Belgian Army. This army,' the Prime Minister added, 'has fought very bravely and has both suffered and inflicted heavy losses. The Belgian Government has dissociated itself from the action of the King.'

But I should fail in my duty as a truthful commentator were I not to recognize that the Prime Minister's generous equanimity is not everywhere shared, either in Great Britain or in France or among the Belgians who have resolved to support their Government in continuing the fight for the Allied cause. Lord Derby, for instance, who is not in the

habit of letting his feelings run away with him, and who knows better than any man what people are thinking in his county of Lancashire, has used strong language about King—who may soon be ex-King—Leopold's conduct. For my part I think it is better to follow the advice which the spirit of Virgil gave to Dante in the *Divine Comedy*, and to say: 'Let us not speak of him; glance only and pass on.'

We, who may soon be faced on our own shores with an ordeal hardly less trying than that through which the stricken towns and villages of Belgium and North-Eastern France have been and are passing, shall meet the blast of Hitler's fury, if and when it comes, with a fortitude not unworthy of our own men across the Channel. We shall remember, if we are just to others as well as to ourselves, that during the past ten years we, like them, have left undone many things which we ought to have done, and have now to show our true worth not only by making good old sins of omission but by bearing ourselves so that a foe who may seek to violate our shores will learn in future to beware of us.

Nor ought one to overlook the splendid contribution which the Labour members of the National Government are making to organize and intensify our war effort, and to rouse the fighting spirit of our people. For those who do not know our people it may not be easy fully to understand the meaning of a summons to work unremittingly, without holidays, such as that issued to the miners of Great Britain on Wednesday by Mr. David Grenfell, Minister of Mines. He himself worked twenty-five years underground, and knew what he was asking his fellow miners to do. They will follow his lead. Surely it is no small thing for miners to be told by one of themselves that there are no longer employers or employed, no longer 'two sides' in coal-getting, but only 'one side' of masters and men working for Allied victory.

Not less vigorous and straightforward have been the appeals and assurances of Mr. Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labour, who has long been one of our most influential trade union leaders, and of Mr. Herbert Morrison, the Minister of Supply. Between them, these two Ministers have charge of the whole civilian effort to carry through the war to a victorious conclusion; and Mr. Bevin has power to direct any person, not under arms, to perform any service which in the Minister's opinion he is capable of performing. And in all

this there is no sense among us that we are being dictated to or ordered about. Rather do we feel greater freedom, and enhanced readiness to do to the utmost of our power anything we may be told to do. To be alive in Britain today is to be proud that our people should be standing and working as one man for the salvation of the freedom of the world.

From Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa come daily proofs that their spirit is even as ours—while from the battle-fields in France and Flanders comes evidence that Hitler's hordes are being driven forward, like automatons, to certain death and are being mowed down by thousands. British, French and Belgian soldiers who have taken part in the fighting agree that the German losses are unparalleled.

While we await the numerical equality, or superiority, in air strength and in mechanized weapons which British factories and workshops, with the material support of the United States, will presently provide, there is another element that justifies complete confidence in the outcome of the struggle. This element is the incontestable fact that wherever French and British fighters on land, in the air or on sea have met the Germans, the individual superiority of the Allies has been proved beyond question. However fanaticized Hitler's hordes may be, their brutality is no match for the spirit of free men fighting for freedom. And there is something else. Our men and the French have seen the almost incredible acts of systematic cruelty which Hitler's armies have deliberately perpetrated under orders deliberately given. They have seen French and Belgian fugitives machine-gunned and bombed without mercy, while German tank drivers have pitilessly crushed the bodies of wounded victims. These sights have filled our men with righteous rage. For such a foe they can feel naught but furious contempt. Their feelings are spreading through the peoples of Britain and France who now know, as they may not have realized before, that they are fighting to rid the world of infamous barbarism.

So, all in all, I feel today more confident of victory than I have ever felt before. When Hitler has done his utmost and his worst, it will still be insufficient to break our spirit or to stay our liberating and avenging arm. However hard the path to victory may be, we shall tread it firmly and shall reach the goal.

WORDS ON THE AIR

THE 'MIRACLE' OF DUNKIRK

By the 'miracle of Dunkirk' on May 30, 31, and June 1 we were spared the 'hard and heavy tidings' which Mr. Winston Churchill had warned us we might have to face. His review of the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Northern France and Flanders, in a statement made to the House of Commons on June 4, contained the reminder: 'Nevertheless, our thankfulness at the escape of our army, and of so many men whose loved ones have passed through an agonizing week, must not blind us to the fact that what has happened in France and Belgium is a colossal military disaster.' He foreshadowed the possibility of invasion and urged that our defences be put into so high a state of organization that the fewest possible numbers will be required to give effective security, and that the largest possible potential of offensive effort may be realized. He concluded his statement with the historic passage: 'Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen, or may fall, into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end; we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and strength in the air, we shall defend our island whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle until in God's good time the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and liberation of the Old.'

These words were ringing in all our ears when I gave my next talk on June 7. It began:

The rush and the speed of this war, since it 'got going' a month ago, makes what happened last week look like ancient history. It is true that the war of 1914 started with a rush, and that those who lived through the August days of that year, until they heard early in September that the Germans

had been checked, beaten and driven back on the river Marne, will never forget the nightmare-quality of that time of trial. It is true, too, that the fortnight which followed Ludendorff's offensive on March 21, 1918, when the British lines were broken and Paris was shelled by German long-range guns, was a period of strain and apprehension. But I cannot remember anything quite like the rapid alternations of the past month. They have their meaning and their lessons which, in a calmer hour, we may be able fully to perceive and to take to heart. Some of them are, indeed, already apparent. But if one looks back to the invasion and the overrunning of Holland between in five days after May 10 (instead of in the eight hours provided for in Hitler's time-table); to the simultaneous invasion of Belgium, down to the treacherous capitulation of her King on May 28; to the German breakthrough on the Meuse in mid-May down to the sweep of the German armoured divisions across Northern France as far as Abbeville, and their quick advance up the coast to Boulogne and Calais—if one looks back on these things one can see why Mr. Winston Churchill gravely advised us last Tuesday week to be prepared for 'hard and heavy tidings.' Not a few of us felt that he was foreshadowing the shock of complete disaster to our men and their French comrades whom the Germans were striving to surround.

Then came what Mr. Churchill could call, a week later, the 'miracle of deliverance,' the astounding feat of rescuing 335,000 men, British and French (without counting the thousands who were saved and taken to French ports) and of bringing them across the Channel amid every kind of difficulty and danger. We breathed more freely. The spirit of the men themselves showed that they knew they were more than a match for the enemy, man for man, and that only adverse conditions, and superior enemy equipment in numbers of aircraft and of mechanized weapons, had prevailed over Allied courage and discipline. This enemy superiority, we felt, would be neutralized and outweighed in time. Time was seen to be a prime factor in the problem.

Meanwhile time was working, for a moment, on our side. The days and weeks which the Germans lost in the attempt to capture or destroy the Allied armies retreating on Dunkirk could be, and were, turned to account by General Weygand in strengthening the Allied line on the Somme and the Aisne

rivers against the southward thrust towards Paris which Hitler would evidently undertake whenever he felt able to do so. The only real doubt was how soon it would be. Some may have thought that after having made so terrific an effort to gain all the Channel ports he would begin by striking at England. It is unlikely that any competent military authority took this view. It may have been supposed that Hitler would need a little more time than he actually left himself to re-organize his armies before throwing them against the Somme. But Hitler is in a terrible hurry. Why, we can only guess.

So, today, with the 'miracle of deliverance' already ranged among the events of past history, we await the outcome of this new battle of the Somme. That it will be a hard fight goes without saying. That Hitler will throw into it all the weight he can muster is equally evident. That he is being, and will be, withstood with a valour not inferior to that of the devoted Allied armies before Dunkirk, and in conditions far less unfavourable, can be taken for granted. We, at home, can only hold our breath and await, not without hope yet sternly prepared for good hap or ill, whatever tidings the coming hours and days may bring.

The remainder of this talk consisted mainly of military opinions upon the immediate prospects, upon the quality of the German army as compared with its quality in 1914-18, and of a discussion of Mussolini's intentions. It ended with the statement of my personal belief that however sure Hitler and Mussolini might be of complete and final victory, they would find themselves mistaken and that the future would take care of them. We had, I said, no reason to boast, or to hide from ourselves the hampering effects of past shortcomings. 'Even less have we reason to be despondent or to fear the final outcome of the war. A month ago I could say with truth that Britain was awake. Today Britain is not only awake but alert, watchful, determined and unafraid.'

MUSSOLINI THE FELON

In the week that followed the British people remained unafraid though adversity was heaped upon them. On June 10 Italy declared war on France and Great Britain. On the same day all

Allied forces were withdrawn from Norway, and King Haakon and his Government took refuge in England. H.M.S. *Glorious*, an aircraft-carrier of 22,500 tons, was lost together with two destroyers. On June 11 the French Government and the Diplomatic Corps left Paris which German forces threatened to occupy and did occupy on June 14. A day earlier the French Prime Minister, M. Reynaud, appealed urgently to the United States for help. Yet amid these disasters British public feeling was roused to contemptuous anger by the behaviour of Mussolini in stabbing France in the back at the moment of her direst peril. Therefore I thought it well in my talk on June 14 to give some account of Mussolini from my personal experience of him, and to show him as what I had always known him to be—a treacherous and cowardly villain. My talk ran:

Volumes will be written upon what has happened this week—upon the Battle of France, culminating, for the present, in the German occupation of Paris; upon the opening of the material resources of the United States to the European Allies; upon the French Prime Minister's poignant appeal to President Roosevelt for fuller and swifter help; and upon 'the indissoluble union of our two peoples and our two Empires' proclaimed in the message of the British Government to France, together with the assurance that ordeal by fire will fuse them 'into one unconquerable whole.'

One cannot say offhand which of these stirring events is the most important. The fall of Paris is tragic. We share to the full the grief of France. But today I should like to speak of the action of the man who, in President Roosevelt's words, stuck a dagger into the back of his neighbour. And I want to speak less of this felon blow than of the felon himself, to tell what I have known of him, his methods and his crimes, since I had the doubtful honour of meeting him at Milan rather more than twenty-two years ago.

It will be largely a personal story, for it is not based only on hearsay. To the best of my knowledge and belief it is true. I ought perhaps to say that I know something of Italy. I lived there for the better part of six years, I learned the Italian language, I knew intimately the leading survivors of the great Italian Risorgimento; and even after I had left Italy I made a point of going back there, year after year, until 1922.

It was in October of that year that Mussolini made his so-called 'March on Rome'—in a comfortable sleeping-car from Milan with a royal telegram in his pocket that appointed him Prime Minister. As I knew the man I resolved never to set foot in Italy again so long as he and his infamous band of gangster criminals should misrule the Italian people.

The distinction between Mussolini and the Italian people ought always to be borne in mind. He is not a typical Italian. He is a Romagnolo, a native of the anarchical province of Romagna which, for nearly a thousand years, was perturbed by faction fights under faction leaders. Mussolini is a faction leader of the worst type. Let me explain how I met him. In October 1917 disaster had befallen the Italian army at Caporetto. An Austro-German offensive had broken through the Italian line with the object—though we did not then know it—of overrunning Northern Italy and of attacking France from the south-east while Ludendorff should begin his great offensive against the British army in North-Eastern France early in 1918. In November 1917 British and French divisions were rushed to Italy in the hope of preventing panic and 'stopping the rot.' But it ought to be remembered that these divisions did not at once go into battle. The knowledge that they were coming encouraged the Italian troops to stand on the River Piave and to check the Austro-German onrush.

One effect of the Caporetto disaster was to bring about an understanding between Italy and the Yugoslav National Committee in London. Millions of Yugoslavs were then subject to Austria-Hungary, and the Yugoslav regiments in the Austro-Hungarian armies were among the best of the Hapsburg forces. They had been enraged against Italy by the Italian demand to annex large portions of Yugoslav territory, and they had been partly responsible for the Austro-German breakthrough at Caporetto. This disaster convinced the Yugoslav National Committee that the independence and unity of their country would be past praying for if Italy and the Western Allies were defeated. So the Yugoslav leaders and some prominent Italians met at my house in December 1917 to work out an Italo-Yugoslav agreement.

In March 1918 I was sent on an official mission to the Italian front to find means of telling the Austro-Hungarian armies of this agreement, and also the Allied determination to liberate all the subject peoples of Austria-Hungary. With

Italian help the means were found. But that is another story.

After having accomplished my mission I was urged by Italian friends to see a man named Mussolini at Milan towards the end of April 1918. On inquiry I learned that he was editing a revolutionary Socialist paper, the *Popolo d'Italia*, which was receiving subsidies from the French Foreign Office and from an Italian armaments firm at Genoa, with dribblets from a British source in Rome. The prospect of meeting so impartial a recipient of financial support seemed interesting. So I had two hours' talk with Benito Mussolini.

There is an Italian word that exactly describes the impression he made upon me. It is '*truce*.' The best Italian dictionary gives the following list of its approximate meanings. They are 'cruel, atrocious, ferocious, brutal, barbarous, horrible.' In later years, when Mussolini had taken to himself the title of *Il Duce*, or *Leader*, his Italian opponents always called him *Il Truce*.

In the course of our talk I explained to Mussolini—whose paper was then urging Italians to fight on for victory—the immense moral advantages which Italy would gain by standing forth as the liberator of the subject Austro-Hungarian peoples and as the friend of Balkan nations that were striving for unity and independence. Such a policy, I argued, would enable Italy to enter an eventual peace conference with a moral and political prestige not inferior to that of the President of the United States; while the friendship of the liberated peoples would safeguard her in future against any attempt from any quarter to imperil her own security.

Mussolini, whose mind works swiftly, saw every point at once. And to every point he added comment which showed that he was thinking how the peoples whom Italy would have helped to liberate could afterwards be hoodwinked, played off against each other, and betrayed. I left him with the feeling that I had been dealing with one of the most sinister and dangerous ruffians whom it had ever been my misfortune to meet. To some Italian friends who wanted to know what I thought of him I said: 'He is a criminal, perhaps a great criminal; the accent may be on "great"; but criminal.' They said they thought I was exaggerating and that he was neither so great nor so criminal as I imagined.

Four years later, in April 1922, six months before Musso-

lini's 'March on Rome,' one of these Italians reminded me of what I had said in 1918 and told me that he had come to share my view. He explained that Mussolini had been carrying on an outrageous campaign against the Cardinal-Archbishop of Milan who had been attacked, with vile abuse, daily in the *Popolo d'Italia*. The Cardinal's organ had replied vigorously. Then, one day, Mussolini had sent for the assistant-editor of the *Popolo d'Italia*, had showed him a neat little package, and had asked him to address it in his clear handwriting to the Cardinal Archbishop. Mussolini explained that his own handwriting was almost illegible—which it is. When the package was addressed, Mussolini blotted the ink with a clean piece of blotting-paper, and instructed the assistant-editor to have it sent to the Archbishop's palace by a public messenger. 'I have had enough of this row with the Archbishop,' Mussolini added, 'so I have bought him a little present as a peace-offering.'

Two hours later a sensation was caused by the announcement that the Cardinal-Archbishop's secretary had opened a package addressed to the Cardinal, and had found in it a live bomb which he had thrown out of the window. It had exploded in the courtyard, doing some damage but, fortunately, injuring nobody. The police had traced the messenger who, however, could not say who had given him the package.

Thereupon Mussolini's assistant-editor rushed into Mussolini's room, exclaiming: 'Was *that* your present to the Archbishop?' Mussolini opened a drawer, took out the clean piece of blotting-paper, held it up, and answered: 'Is *that* your handwriting? Shut up.' Horrified, the assistant-editor bolted from the office; but Mussolini managed to get the scandal hushed up.

In later years I verified this story in a quarter which knew all the details. It was confirmed in every particular. They were entirely in keeping with my impression of the man, and with his conduct during and after the semi-Communist disorders that had broken out in Northern Italy in September 1920. Mussolini, who by that time had formed his *Fasci*, or bands of Blackshirts, had offered their help to some groups of revolutionary workmen who had seized a number of factories. The workmen refused his help and presently returned the factories to their owners. Mussolini then sold the services of his Blackshirts to financiers and industrialists who

used them to break the heads of the workmen. The outbreak of disorder was suppressed. In July 1921 Mussolini wrote in his paper that if anybody still talked of a Bolshevik or Communist peril in Italy, after what had been done in September 1920, he was an ignorant fool. Yet the cry against the Communist peril was steadily spread by Mussolini's Blackshirts, and served to put them into power. In later years a British officer in Rome asked Mussolini whether it was true that there had been no Communist peril in Italy after September 1920. Mussolini answered: 'It is quite true; but it is also true that I climbed into power on the shoulders of silly people who thought there was a Communist peril.'

This is the real Mussolini. All the villainies he perpetrated after his 'March on Rome,' all the beatings, murders and dosings of his critics with castor oil, were carried out under his orders. If ever the true story of the murder of Matteotti, the Italian Labour leader, can be published in the light of evidence taken by a Commission of the Italian Senate, it will reveal one of the most unspeakable crimes that stain the history of any country. The revolt of Italian feeling against it would have smashed Fascism if Italian Liberals had been bolder and if the King had backed them. Having escaped this danger Mussolini made a prisoner of the King by compelling him to abrogate the Italian Constitution, with its guarantees of individual freedom, upon which Italian unity was founded under the House of Savoy. After thus assenting to the destruction of the legal basis of his throne, the King of Italy became a powerless instrument of Mussolini's will. Even the order of succession to the throne has to be decided by his Fascist Grand Council.

Had Fascism not triumphed in Italy by crime, force and guile, Hitlerism would not have arisen in Germany. Hitler learned his technique from Mussolini, whom he took as his model. Of the two I think Mussolini no less criminal, but Hitler more astute as a political gangster. Each distrusts the other thoroughly, though both know that they stand or fall together. If it be asked why Mussolini has now thrown in his lot with Hitler, the answer is that he could not afford to see Hitler overthrown lest he perish likewise. Nor could he afford to see Hitler triumph single-handed, lest Mussolini get little or no loot. The two gangster-gamblers are staking everything upon one throw of the iron dice.

WORDS ON THE AIR

They will lose. They may ruin Germany, Italy, and half the rest of Europe, but they will fail. They are fighting not only against the forces of freedom but against the power of the truth; and against the truth it is written that the gates of Hell shall not prevail. Yet we in Great Britain and France, who have for many years paltered with evil, sought to 'appease' it, and were unwilling to see the truth until the twelfth hour, are now paying and shall have to pay a terrible price for our own redemption and for the liberation of the world. But at least we now know that our cause is just and holy, and that to ensure its triumph no sacrifice can be too great.

BRITAIN STANDS ALONE

By June 21, when I was due to give my next talk, France had fallen, and Britain and the British Commonwealth stood alone. On June 16 the Reynaud Cabinet had held two meetings at Bordeaux to consider whether President Roosevelt's reply to M. Reynaud's appeal would permit France to continue the struggle on her own territory under conditions which would usefully serve the common cause. On the same day, with the object of helping France and supporting her to the utmost, the British Government offered to conclude a solemn Act of Union between the two countries and communicated its text to the Reynaud Cabinet. The offer was rejected. On June 17 M. Reynaud resigned, and Marshal Pétain formed a new Government which at once took steps to secure an armistice from Germany. On June 18 General de Gaulle had broadcast from London to the French people his message: 'France has lost a battle; she has not lost the war.' On June 19 Hitler and Mussolini met in Munich and agreed upon their reply to the French request for an armistice. On June 20 Marshal Pétain announced he had appointed plenipotentiaries to receive the German and the Italian conditions. Hitler handed his armistice terms to the French representatives on 21 June in the forest of Compiègne at the same spot and in the same railway coach as the Allied armistice terms had been given to Germany in 1918. On June 22 France accepted the German terms. In my talk on June 21 I said:

After such a week as that through which we have been passing, ordinary language seems inadequate to say what we feel and think. Half-forgotten odds and ends of poetry recur, unsought, to one's mind because they fit the facts better than prose. What, in bygone years, we might have thought exalted sentiment, a trifle overdone, now comes back to us as sober truth. And the sober truth is that we in Great Britain are left to hold the fort for freedom. If we go down, all goes down. If we stand, and gain time for others to stand with us or behind us, all may be well. Shall we stand? Can we stand?

During the past week I have not met one man or one woman of British blood and birth who has not answered these two questions with an emphatic affirmative. Many of them were humble folk, not talkative or in the habit of finding the right word for what they want to say. The only question they have asked has been: 'How long do you think it will take us to down old Hitler?'

On the other hand I have met a good many foreigners, some of them fugitives from Nazi tyranny or from the despotism of Mussolini. These people have lived among us for years without ever getting below the surface of things. With one or two exceptions I have found them frightened, ready to believe that we could not withstand alone the onslaught and the pressure of the Nazi force and terror of which we have had a foretaste, in the form of air raids, in the last two or three nights. I have told them, rather curtly, to keep their fears to themselves, and to thank heaven that they are in England.

You will have heard echoes, or the actual words, of Mr. Winston Churchill's utterances. They said what we all feel and mean. They were not merely an official tonic. They drew out what was within us. In looking back to the now distant time of the evacuation of the British and French troops from Dunkirk, I think the spirit of our people showed itself then as it is and will be. Everybody who had a boat or a tug or a barge went across, almost gaily, into an inferno to help in bringing those men off. And we who had no boats and couldn't go, have envied them ever since. Some scores gave their lives, and nobody thinks of those lives as having been lost. We should not have wanted anybody to think our lives lost if we had been able to give them in so splendid a way. And the idea has come to many people who could never be

suspected of vainglorious 'imperialism': 'After all, the British Empire can't be altogether an accident!'

Now we know that we have to go through the mill, and may come out of it battered and bruised. The only thing we feel sure of is that neither the body nor the spirit of Britain will be crushed. It would not be true to say that the crushing of France under the wheels of Hitler's chariot, and the decision of Marshal Pétain's Government to ask for an 'honourable' armistice, did not grieve and startle us. We were startled and shocked. And when we remembered what the Prime Minister had said, more than a fortnight ago—that we should, if necessary, fight on 'alone'—we saw that he must have known, or guessed, that there might be something rotten in the state of France. I, too, knew that there was something wrong, because I had come across traces of it during my visit to France last April; but I hoped and believed that men like Paul Reynaud, Georges Mandel and M. Dautry would keep the upper hand of it and, with the backing of the people, would be able to master it. Here, I and others were overconfident. Yet, even today, I feel sure that Mr. Winston Churchill was right when he said, in his brief broadcast last Monday evening, that nothing will alter our faith that the genius of France will rise again.

How and when we cannot know. We know only that it will take Hitler all his time to keep France in subjection, however ruthlessly he may set about it. All the same it has been a nightmare of a week, and the nightmare is not yet lifted. It really began with the French decision not to defend Paris. It was this that took the heart out of the French troops. M. Paul Reynaud and some of his colleagues, I understand, wanted to defend Paris at all costs, quarter by quarter and street by street. They were overruled, and the French Government withdrew first to Tours and then to Bordeaux. But the first real sign that something was sadly amiss came with M. Reynaud's almost despairing appeal to President Roosevelt. As I listened to it by radio, amid the quiet of the English countryside, I felt that worse was to come. Late on Sunday night it came, with the announcement that Marshal Pétain had taken over the Government and that certain French public men, who had never been stalwarts, were expected to join him. The fact that they declined to join him altered nothing. On Monday we heard of his appeal to Hitler

—and of the rapid occupation of further French regions by the German forces. Not until late on Monday night did we learn that the British proposal for a complete Franco-British Union had been in the hands of the French Government before the Reynaud Cabinet fell, that it had not been accepted, despite M. Reynaud's entreaties, and that, as far as Marshal Pétain's Government might be concerned, European France would be out of the war.

Our first feeling was not one of dismay. It was one of grief for the people of France, and of anxiety for the safety of the British and Canadian troops who had been rushed to the help of the French since the evacuation of Dunkirk. On the latter point the Prime Minister was able to reassure us on Tuesday. Most if not all of our new divisions were got away with their guns, some of them only by the skin of their teeth, and were saved by operations carried through in the spirit of Dunkirk. As to the French Navy, we felt fairly sure that it would not let itself fall into the hands of the enemy. Nor did we believe that any terms Hitler would be likely to grant would make it easy for Marshal Pétain and his colleagues to tell their people to accept them without further resistance. The news that the Admiral in command of Toulon has ordered the city to be defended at all costs did not surprise those who know him, or who know the feeling of French sailors. We are not yet at the end of that chapter.

But what of the beginning and the end of our own chapter? I have been turning these things over in my mind in the light of such knowledge as I may possess. Hitler is, of course, on the top of the wave. His troops entered Paris on 14 June, a day before the date fixed in his time-table. He dominates half Europe, from the border of Soviet Russia to the Atlantic, not to mention Denmark and Norway. To hold so vast a territory, with its inhabitants, in complete subjection, will be no easy matter. He may be able to do it, for a time—long enough, he may think, for the concentration of all his strength against England. When Mussolini met him the other day at Munich to settle their answer to Marshal Pétain's appeal, the well-drilled crowds sang the Nazi song: 'We are starting against England.' Meanwhile, night after night, British bombers take toll of oil deposits, factories and munition works in half a dozen German cities; and, if I know anything of the people of those cities, they will say to themselves: 'It's all very fine

to conquer France and to start against England; but why can't the British be stopped from bombing us here?' The Germans know, and Hitler knows, that unless England can be knocked out quickly, the tide of victory may turn, as it turned in 1918. So they are determined, if they can, to smash England before she, Britain, the British Empire and the British Commonwealth, with the resources of the United States behind them, can develop such strength that no German city will be safe, and no German hold on any conquered country. The lightning war must be won at lightning speed if it is to be won at all.

This is our danger and this, if the danger be withstood and overcome, is the pledge of our victory. As far as invasion goes we are better prepared to meet it and defeat it than we have ever been in our history. Alongside of our own forces of well over a million trained men, we have splendid Canadian, and now Australian and New Zealand, contingents to help us. Hitler may still have more, perhaps many more, aircraft than we have yet got; but each of our machines and our men are worth more than two of his. So it comes down to the question of our own nerve and spirit. Will the pluck, the grit, the stomach of our civilians be equal to the courage, the skill and the superiority over the foe which characterize our fighting men?

On this point I feel no doubt whatever. We may suffer cruelly but we shall not wince. There was something better than rhetoric in what Mr. Churchill said to the House of Commons on Tuesday: 'Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. . . . Let us therefore address ourselves to our duty, so bear ourselves that if the British Commonwealth and Empire last for a thousand years men will still say, "This was their finest hour."' We are addressing ourselves to our duty, not boastfully but soberly and prayerfully, not expecting to do it unscathed or to win 'the Battle of Britain' without grievous loss. We feel that the young R.A.F. pilot put into words our inmost thoughts more worthily than we could have put them in the letter he wrote to be sent to his mother if he should be killed—as he was. After speaking of his mother's sacrifices to give him 'as good an education and background as anyone in the country' he said:

'My death would not mean that your struggle has been in

vain. Far from it. It means that your sacrifice is as great as mine. Those who serve England must expect nothing from her; we debase ourselves if we regard our country as merely a place in which to eat and sleep. . . . For all that can be said against it, I still maintain that this war is a very good thing; every individual is having the chance to give and bear all for his principle, like the martyrs of old.'

I said just now that ordinary language seems inadequate at moments like this, and that poetry fits the facts better than prose. Some of our younger folk say that Kipling has not meant as much to them as he meant to us of the older generation; yet I find in this airman's letter the very spirit of the lines Kipling wrote in 1914:

No easy hope or lies
Shall bring us to our goal,
But iron sacrifice
Of body, will, and soul.
There is but one task for all—
One life for each to give.
What stands if Freedom fall?
Who dies if England live?

And did we not know that Wordsworth's famous sonnet after Napoleon's victory at Jena in October 1806 was written more than one hundred and thirty years ago we might think that he had Hitler and the downfall of France in his mind. Listen to it:

Another year!—another deadly blow!
Another mighty Empire overthrown!
And We are left, or shall be left, alone:
The last that dare to struggle with the Foe.
'Tis well! from this day forward we shall know
That in ourselves our safety must be sought:
That by our own right hands it must be wrought;
That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.
O dastard whom such foretaste doth not cheer!
We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant; not a servile band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour which they do not understand.

Today, it is true, we do not 'stand unpropped.' We have with us the peoples and the troops of the Commonwealth and the Empire, the goodwill of the United States—where the appointments of Mr. Henry L. Stimson and Colonel Knox to President Roosevelt's Cabinet are a portent—and the prayers of millions whom Hitler has, indeed, laid low but who yearn to shake off his yoke and to rise again. We may have—who knows?—the help of Frenchmen unsubdued and eager both to stand with us now and to join us one day in the union we offered France last Sunday. So we are not 'unpropped'; though, for the present, the great issue lies within our shores, and upon it the fate of the world may hang.

I have pondered these things in my heart during the past week as coolly and calmly as I could; and I verily believe that in our hands the fate of the world will be safe.

CHAPTER SIX
BRITAIN STANDS ALONE

June to Mid-August 1940

ON June 23 the full text of the terms of capitulation accepted by the Pétain Government of France was published in London. It was followed at once by a British official statement which ran:

H.M. Government have heard with grief and amazement that the terms dictated by the Germans have been accepted by the French Government at Bordeaux. They cannot feel that such, or similar, terms could have been submitted to by any French Government which possessed freedom, independence, and constitutional authority. Such terms, if accepted by all Frenchmen, would place not only France but the French Empire entirely at the mercy and in the power of the German and Italian Dictators. Not only would the French people be held down and forced to work against their Ally, not only would the soil of France be used with the approval of the Bordeaux Government as the means of attacking their Ally, but the whole resources of the French Empire and of the French Navy would speedily pass into the hands of the adversary for the fulfilment of his purpose.

H.M. Government firmly believe that whatever happens they will be able to carry the war wherever it may lead, on the seas, in the air, and upon land, to a successful conclusion. When Great Britain is victorious she will, in spite of the action of the Bordeaux Government, cherish the cause of the French people, and a British victory is the only possible hope for the restoration of the greatness of France and the freedom

of its peoples. Brave men from other countries overrun by Nazi invasion are steadfastly fighting in the ranks of freedom. Accordingly H.M. Government call upon all Frenchmen outside the power of the enemy to aid them in their task and thereby to render its accomplishment more sure and swift. They appeal to all Frenchmen, wherever they may be, to aid to the utmost of their strength the forces of liberation which are enormous and which, faithfully and resolutely used, will assuredly prevail.

Simultaneously General de Gaulle announced the formation of a French National Committee in London. This Committee was immediately recognized as competent to represent France in all matters affecting the prosecution of the war so long as the Committee should continue to represent all French elements resolved to fight the common enemy.

Another result of the fall of France was the occupation by Soviet Russia of the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia and Esthonia between June 15 and June 17. Great Britain, for her part, demilitarized the Channel Islands and withdrew from them. In Roumania King Carol assumed dictatorial powers; and in Italian North Africa Marshal Balbo, one of Mussolini's original Fascists and afterwards an object of his envy, mysteriously perished in an aeroplane. Mussolini announced that Balbo had been killed in battle by British aircraft. A British official statement at once declared that no British aircraft had been engaged with Marshal Balbo's machine 'and there is no truth in the statement that he fell in battle.'

THE FRENCH SURRENDER

My talk on June 28, 1940, was given with a feeling that we knew the worst and were determined to face it. I said:

Odd though it may seem, there is a certain comfort in knowing that we are down to bedrock and that the bedrock won't give way. We don't know yet how broad or how narrow our bedrock foundation will be, though we may know before long. Broader or narrower, we are going to build upon it, to rear a bomb-proof home for freedom, and to send out from

it in all directions a message of hope and faith to the world, a message that deeds will confirm.

Nothing essential in the situation was altered by what one of our leading newspapers called the 'Myth and Melodrama' of the capitulation act which Hitler staged at Compiègne last Friday—an act that began at the very moment when I was telling you of my belief that in our hands the fate of the world will be safe. Nothing, too, was altered by the whisking off of the French representatives to Rome in a German aeroplane so that they might be made to swallow another potion of shame and humiliation. I need not now repeat the terms exacted by Nazi Germany and her jackal, Fascist Italy. They could not have been harder in reality, though they might have appeared even more brutal, if the Government at Bordeaux had left European France to the enemy, and had resolved to carry on the fight, as a faithful ally, in and from North Africa.

We cannot yet judge the repercussions of the French capitulation. They may, they probably will be, world-wide. They are already affecting the position in the Far East, where Japan is taking a lively interest in French Indo-China. Soviet Russia is taking the Roumanian provinces of Bessarabia and Bukovina, and may intend to establish control over the Roumanian oil fields and the Roumanian Black Sea ports as well as the mouths of the Danube. What is going on there is not particularly clear for the moment; but it looks as though Russia does not mean Germany and Italy to have things all their own way in the Balkans.

Until these and other consequences of the French collapse work themselves out more plainly, one question is puzzling many minds. It is why France crumpled up, or broke down so badly, at the top; why Hitler's 'Fifth Column' in France could carry the day so completely. I have thought a good deal about this matter; and I should like to give you my conclusions for what they may be worth. Here they are.

The power of Hitler and of his Nazi creed, like the power of the group of methods and ideas known as Fascism, does not reside only in mechanized military strength, formidable though that strength has proved to be. It lies also, perhaps chiefly, in the fear for their money and their property which Russian Bolshevism or Communism has put into the hearts and minds of many people in many countries who have something to lose. These people know that in Soviet Russia both

property and individual freedom were suppressed. Without asking why this could happen more easily than elsewhere in a country, like Russia, that had never known freedom, these people, with something to lose, were persuaded to look upon Fascism and Nazism as lesser evils than Communism. Between a revolutionary system that destroyed both freedom and property, and equally revolutionary systems that pretended to destroy only freedom, they were tempted to sympathize with the latter, and to credit assurances that Fascism and Nazism were the only sure safeguard against Bolshevism or Communism. Freedom, these people reflected, might be and no doubt was a very good thing; but when it came to the point of deciding whether freedom was preferable to the safety of material possessions these people shook their heads and thought: 'If we can't have both freedom and material safety, we would rather have material safety without freedom.'

It is upon this semi-defeatist mood that Nazi and Fascist propaganda has skilfully played for years. It has been the stock-in-trade of 'Fifth Columns' everywhere, and not least in France. Few answered this propaganda, or stood up against defeatism, by declaring that while huge agglomerations of property, or monopolies, may have to be controlled in the public interest, some degree of personal and private property is an indispensable safeguard of individual freedom, and that neither this safeguard nor any other is respected by the Nazi and Fascist systems any more than it is by Communism. Among the few who did make a stand was Mr. Anthony Eden who rightly declared that if we are asked to choose between Communism and Nazism, we shall choose neither but shall hold fast to the free institutions and the liberal outlook upon which the British Commonwealth of Nations is based. We have, he argued, already a better system and a nobler faith than those of Communism, Fascism or Nazism. We do not inhabit a half-way house between Communism and Fascism. Our abode, he insisted, is 'in another street altogether,' and we shall defend it victoriously.

The well-known French writer, M. André Siegfried, said two important things in a little book he wrote some years ago upon French political parties. Speaking of the French 'bourgeoisie,' or comfortable middle class, he explained that 'a bourgeois is a man who has something to fall back upon, something to lose.' Then, alluding to the liking of most

Frenchmen for progressive or even radical ideas, commonly called 'the ideas of the Left,' he said: 'The hearts of most Frenchmen are on the Left, but their pockets are on the Right; and, in practice, nearly every Frenchman has a pocket.'

While this is true, even of the great mass of French peasants and artisans, it is also true that these same people have always been ready to give their blood for France. But the same cannot be said with equal certainty of portions of the French upper classes. And it is exactly among these portions of the upper classes that 'Fifth Column' propaganda made the greatest progress. Frenchmen of all classes whom I have seen during the past week tell me that the advisers who influenced the Bordeaux Government represent only those elements in the upper classes which preferred surrender to a fight for freedom at no matter what cost. They do not represent the French people.

It is because we believe that the French people, and such men as General de Gaulle, represent the true spirit of France that there is today no recrimination against France or her people in Great Britain. It is because we share with Mr. Winston Churchill the belief that (as he said) 'the interests of France and the spirit of France will find some other expression than in the melancholy decisions which have been taken by the Government of Bordeaux. We shall certainly aid,' Mr. Churchill went on, 'to the best of our ability and resources, any movement of Frenchmen, outside the power of the enemy, to work for the defeat of Nazi German barbarism, and for the freedom and restoration of France.' With them we have one thing in common. This thing is the feeling, the conviction, the passionate understanding that nothing is comparable to freedom, no material welfare, no property or possession, no ease or comfort. We fight on, literally, 'for all we have and are'; and of what we have, our freedom, and the chance of saving freedom for the world, are by far the most precious.

Great Britain has been compared to a beleaguered fortress awaiting attack. Night after night, enemy aircraft attempt to cross our shores, to disturb our slumbers and to do what damage they can. Hitherto, the damage has been trifling, and the effect upon our spirit has been less than nil. But we are not merely a fortress waiting for attack. We are attacking, in

Europe and in Northern and Eastern Africa. In course of time we shall sally forth from our fortress in ways and with a strength that will give Hitler and Mussolini food for reflection. We are not going to be beaten; and, in their heart of hearts, they know it.

I was thinking the other day of earlier attempts to invade Britain and to destroy her freedom. Two of them were really dangerous. In comparison with the strength and the resources of England—for Scotland was then a separate kingdom—in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, the strength and the resources of Spain were far greater than are those of Hitler and Mussolini today. Yet the Spanish Armada failed lamentably. In comparison with the power of Napoleon, when all Europe was at his feet after the overthrow of Prussia in 1806 and the peace of Tilsit with Russia in 1807, the power of Britain seemed almost negligible. And in those days Britain was by no means the home of enlightened freedom that she was to become in later decades of the nineteenth century, whereas Napoleon could still count upon the goodwill and the active support of many continental peoples to whom the French Revolutionary armies, under his command, had brought hope of liberation from bondage. Yet Napoleon, great soldier though he was, failed as completely as Philip of Spain had failed in 1588.

Today, it is true, we are no longer an island in the sense of being intangible unless our sea-power be broken. We are vulnerable from the air. But in our airmen the spirit of Drake and of Nelson lives again. Already they are holding their own, and more than their own, against enemy forces still numerically superior, though soon to be numerically inferior. Then we, today, hold two advantages which neither Hitler nor Mussolini can command. Today it is we who represent the spirit of freedom, we who constitute the only hope of peoples now enslaved. The moral advantage which Napoleon held in his earlier campaigns now lies with us. The other advantage is our freedom of access to the resources and the raw materials of the world, not to mention the immense industrial power and the goodwill of the United States. If, with these advantages, and with a spirit never more valiant in our history than it is today, we were to doubt, even for an instant, the certainty of our triumph over the forces of evil, we should be untrue to English and British traditions, and

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should be faithless custodians of the heritage which generation after generation of free men have bequeathed to us.

Whatever our shortcomings may have been in the past we are today open-eyed, and fully persuaded that in our own strength, moral, military and material, we must place our trust. And when I say 'our own strength' I do not mean only the strength of our home folk in Great Britain. I mean the strength of the free Dominions, of the Empire and of every heart and mind throughout the world that feels and knows that our cause is nothing less than the cause of mankind. There is such a thing as to be proud of the supreme honour that has devolved upon us, of the responsibility for upholding human right, and righteousness itself, against terror, guile and tyranny. This pride we feel, not arrogantly but with humble devotion to the great duty we have to discharge. What the shape of things may be when we have done this duty we neither know nor care overmuch. We know only that should we fail, all will fail; should we triumph—as we shall—others besides ourselves will profit by the freedom and the safety we shall have defended and won for them. Of material profit there can be little or none for many a long day. The curse of Hitlerism must weigh for years upon a Western world which Hitler, in the service of megalomaniac Pan-German ambition, has condemned to squander its substance upon the destructive agencies of war. If this were a fight for material gain it would be active madness. But since it is a fight for all that is good and true, high and noble, we shall fight it through to its victorious end, so that men may know that in the hour of peril Britain and the British peoples stood as the bulwark of the free spirit of man.

THE FRENCH NAVY

Among the major anxieties caused by the fall of France was doubt whether the French Fleet would accept the authority of the Pétain Government and come under the control of the enemy or whether French sailors would follow the lead of General de Gaulle and continue the struggle as Allies of the British Navy. It was felt to be imperative to clear up this doubt with the least possible delay. So on July 3 all French vessels lying in British ports were taken

over by British sailors. At Alexandria a French battleship and four French cruisers were informed that they could not be allowed to leave harbour or to fall into German hands. Arrangements were made to this effect. But two of the finest vessels, the *Dunkerque* and the *Strasbourg*, modern battle-cruisers, superior to similar types in the German Navy, together with two battleships, lay on the North African shore either at Oran or at the adjacent military port of Mars-El-Kebir. Despite a request from a British officer that these vessels should either join the British Navy, or be interned in a British port, or sail under escort with reduced crews to some French port in the West Indies, the French Admiral remained obdurate and compelled the British Commander, Vice-Admiral Somerville, to put them out of action. After a sharp engagement one battle-cruiser was damaged and driven ashore, a battleship sunk, another heavily damaged, while one battle-cruiser managed to escape to Toulon.

On 4 July Mr. Churchill announced this lamentable necessity to the House of Commons with profound grief; and Mr. A. V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, stated that the action at Oran had 'gone far to redress what might have been a serious adverse balance created by the terms which the Bordeaux Government had accepted.'

In these circumstances my talk on July 5 began as follows:

We feel that today there is only one world affair—the action which the British Navy, under the orders of a unanimous British War Cabinet, was compelled to take against the French Navy, and particularly against the French warships off Oran in Algeria when their commander refused any of the conditions designed to prevent his vessels from being used by the enemy against Great Britain. No graver or harder decision can ever have been taken by a British Government, and none will have caused those whose duty it was to take it, or the British people whom they represent, keener pangs of regret.

The feelings of Frenchmen who have remained true to the Allied cause are even more poignant than our own. We bow before them in respectful sympathy. We know, as they know, that no other course was left open to us by the heinous betrayal of the Allied cause, and of the cause of France, by

Marshal Pétain's Government. As General de Gaulle, the acknowledged and recognized head of free Frenchman, said in a broadcast address to the French people this week, Marshal Pétain and his colleagues 'rushed into shame.' They gave themselves up to an ecstasy of surrender. No plainer proof of their behaviour can be found than in the fact, which the Prime Minister revealed to the House of Commons on Thursday afternoon, that Marshal Pétain's Government released, for action against Great Britain, 400 captive German pilots, many of whose machines had been shot down by British airmen—and released them notwithstanding the promise of M. Paul Reynaud that these prisoners should be handed over to Great Britain.

A fortnight ago I said that there are moments when poetry is more adequate than prose to convey our feelings and our thoughts. This is again such a moment. Last Saturday a leading British newspaper published a poem by Sir Robert Vansittart, Under-Secretary of State in the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Adviser to the War Cabinet. It bore the title '1904-1940,' and was conceived as a review of the Anglo-French Entente that was concluded in the former year. Of all Englishmen Sir Robert Vansittart was probably the best qualified to write it. He has been a devoted friend of France from his youth. So complete was his mastery of the French language that a play which he wrote in French was given with much success at one of the State theatres in Paris. During his official career he has watched, from within, every phase of Anglo-French relations for a generation. So I make no apology for quoting three of the verses which he addressed, as a lover, to France. I quote them because it ought to be known throughout the world that the tone of this poem represents our real spirit. Here they are:

Did you keep faith with me? When all was well
 Yes; but I claved to you when all was not.
 And, when temptation touched your citadel,
 Your weakness won again, and you forgot—

Forgot your Self, and freedom and your friends
 Even interest; and now our vaunted glow
 Becomes a blush, as the long story ends
 In sorry separation at Bordeaux.

WORDS ON THE AIR

You hate me now; you will not hate me less
If I go on unshaken by your fall,
If *for your sake*, devoid of bitterness,
I face the world without you after all.

Today the closing lines may need to be re-written as regards the part of France that gives its allegiance to Marshal Pétain whom the German press already calls the 'Führer' of the French nation. They may have to run:

If, *for your sake*, devoid of bitterness,
I face the world *against you* after all.

Neither these lines nor any part of Sir Robert Vansittart's poem affects General de Gaulle, Admiral Muselier and their comrades, who feel and know that the honour of France and her future welfare are henceforth in our, and in their, keeping.

I have said that today we feel there is only one world affair. Tomorrow, or in the near future, there may be a world affair of still greater import—an attempt by Hitler to invade, conquer and destroy Britain. We are ready to meet and to defeat this attempt. In withstanding and overcoming it we mean to inflict upon Hitler his first reverse, to prove that he is neither invincible nor invulnerable and, in so doing, to give new hope to the peoples now writhing under the German heel, yet one day to be set free by our arms. On this subject all that can be fitly said has been said by the Prime Minister. He has spoken with the authentic voice of Britain. So I will now turn to the minor events of the past week, and try to review them in some kind of perspective.

Last Saturday the official announcement was made in Rome that Air Marshal Italo Balbo, Governor-General of Libya and Commander-in-Chief of the Italian forces in North Africa, had been shot down and killed in an engagement with British aircraft not far from the Egyptian border. Flags in Italy were ordered to be flown at half-mast, and tearful tributes were paid to one of the founders of Fascism who was alleged to have died heroically in combat with the foe. No confirmation came from the British Air Command in Egypt. On the contrary, it was declared that no engagement of aircraft had taken place on the day when Marshal Balbo fell. Then it transpired that he had been flying in an

aeroplane with his brother-in-law and the Italian Consul-General at Tripoli, who had perished with him. This fact deepened suspicion. Airmen do not as a rule carry passengers when they take off to engage the enemy. What actually happened we may never know. We know only that Italo Balbo is dead, and that one of the less unworthy of the band of gangsters who helped Mussolini to create the Fascist system is no more. But we remember that he narrowly escaped death in a curious accident that befell an aeroplane in Italy which he was expected to fly during a demonstration of the Italian Air Force soon after his return from the spectacular formation-flight of Italian aircraft to Chicago and back, by way of Iceland, some years ago. The pilot who flew that aeroplane in his stead was killed when it got mysteriously out of control in mid-air, and crashed.

Balbo has been succeeded by General Graziani, the Italian Commander who 'pacified' Libya by methods that earned him the name of 'The Butcher.' One of his methods was to collect Arab chieftains who had been reluctant to acknowledge Italian rule, to send them up in aircraft and to drop them from great heights on to their native villages. It was Graziani, too, who proved his right to the title of 'Butcher' when he ordered an indiscriminate massacre of Abyssinians at Addis Ababa, the Abyssinian capital, after a bomb had been thrown in 1936. We may be sure that he will spare no effort to keep up his reputation.

More immediately important than the fighting in North Africa and in Abyssinia has been the turn in the situation between Russia and Roumania. The Russian occupation or rather annexation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina after the Roumanian acceptance of a Russian ultimatum, has been looked upon in some quarters as likely to put the noses of Hitler and Mussolini out of joint. It might be wrong to jump to any conclusion of this kind, or to suppose that there is an effective lack of harmony between Moscow and Berlin. Indeed it is more correct to say that Russia moved with the knowledge of Berlin. The Moscow Government is, no doubt, making hay while the sun shines, and is determined that nobody else shall meddle in that part of the Roumanian hay-field in which Russia is particularly interested. There may or may not be further developments. Until they occur, and we know what they mean, it is prudent to refrain from specula-

tion; for of all the unknown quantities in the world today, the policy of Soviet Russia is one of the least calculable.

Better known are the character and the tendencies of King Carol of Roumania. For some years past he has been gravitating towards the Rome-Berlin Axis. He has longed to make himself the dictator of his country. In saying this I am not speaking at random. Neary three years ago I was given information, from the most direct and authoritative quarter, upon King Carol's intentions. I have the best reason to know that he looked upon Russia as Roumania's chief enemy, and that he had on this account got rid of M. Titulescu, the famous Roumanian Foreign Minister, who had come to an agreement with Soviet Russia that implied Russian recognition of the Roumanian title to keep Bessarabia. King Carol would have none of it. He professed lively admiration for Hitler—though he knew that Hitler's policy aimed at the establishment of German control over Roumanian oil-fields, timber and corn, as well as over the Roumanian coast on the Black Sea as a basis for future attack upon Soviet Russia. King Carol made no secret, even three years ago, of his determination to drive all Roumanian parties in double harness, with himself as supreme driver. Now, with his new pro-Nazi Government, he is trying to do it; but it remains to be seen in what kind of ditch he will land himself and his people.

Characteristically he began his latest approach to Hitler and Mussolini by repudiating the British guarantee of Roumanian territory which was spontaneously given in April last year; and, by accepting the Russian ultimatum, he has relieved Great Britain of an obligation which she undertook in 1920, jointly with several other countries, including Japan, to uphold the Roumanian title to Bessarabia. As the British Government has declared, King Carol's repudiation of last year's British guarantees alters nothing in our freedom to act as our interests may require in that part of the world. It alters only any lingering belief there may have been among British statesmen that King Carol, whose mother was a British princess, cares for anything except his own—possibly short-sighted—view of his personal interests.

For the moment his urgent appeals to Hitler and Mussolini may have secured him a respite from Hungarian and Bulgarian demands upon Roumanian territory, for neither Germany nor Italy really wants war in the Balkans. These

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demands are now stated to have been transferred from the military to the diplomatic sphere. But we all know—and, if we did not know, Marshal Pétain and his colleagues might be able to tell us—what happens when a country's welfare and freedom depend upon diplomatic negotiations with Hitler and Mussolini.

While it cannot be said that events in South-Eastern Europe or in the Balkans are matters of minor importance, seeing that they may involve Russia as well as Germany and Italy, it is plain that the probably impending attack of Hitler upon Great Britain must overshadow every other pre-occupation. Upon the outcome of this attack may depend not only the ultimate course of the war in Europe but the development of the situation in the Far East and in the Pacific Ocean. We feel and know that we are the garrison of the citadel of freedom in the world, and that upon our power to defend it victoriously the fate of civilization itself may hang. Never have our people been more determined, never more confident of their ability to rise to the height of a great emergency. They are not even conscious of anxiety. They see their duty, and they will do it. Terrible hours may lie ahead of us; yet we are not terrified. Rather do we feel that it is a noble thing to live, and to be able to fight or, if need be, to die for such a cause as that which it is now given to us to uphold. It will be stoutly and worthily upheld.

AWAITING ATTACK

Hitler had entered Paris on June 14, one day earlier than the date announced in his programme. According to the same programme he intended to enter London and to sleep at Buckingham Palace on August 15. So we were waiting for him to make some attempt to fulfil this unilateral engagement—with a mental reservation that anything we could do to frustrate his purpose would be done. While we were waiting we noted with more interest than surprise the steps taken by Marshal Pétain to make himself dictator of France. He drew up a new French Constitution, abolished the Republican Constitution of 1875, and declared, in almost royal style: 'We, Philippe Pétain, Marshal of France, declare that we assume the functions of Chief of the French State.' Then he

issued a 'constitutional decree' saying: 'The Chief of the French State has full governmental powers. He appoints and dismisses Ministers and Secretaries of State, who are responsible only to him.' And so as to leave no doubt as to the quality of his rule he appointed the cleverest rascal in French public life, Pierre Laval, to be his successor. In these circumstances it was fairly plain that nothing which Pétain or Laval might do would tend to hamper German operations against Great Britain. In my next talk on July 12 I said:

The great German attack on England has not yet begun, and we do not quite know when it will begin. Day after day and night after night a certain number of German aircraft fly over, or try to fly over, various parts of the country, and many of them do not go back to tell the tale. They have killed or wounded a few people, they have done some damage to houses here and there, but there seems to be no proportion between the material or moral effect of their raids and the hammering they have got from our aircraft and coastal defences. Their biggest efforts this week have failed in their purpose, and they have lost some scores of planes while our Air Force lost very few. One of our military experts comes to the conclusion that the Germans are still training their pilots to fly over Great Britain, and that we must look out for greater concentrations against definite centres before very long. He may be right. To a layman like me, it rather looks as though Hitler or Goering or whoever has the last word in this matter had not yet made up his mind. And if I try to put myself in the place of Hitler or Goering and to reason upon it, my reasoning works out something like this:

'The British are not behaving well. They don't seem to understand that there is no hope for them now that France is down and out. They are very obstinate, and must be taught a Nazi lesson. The trouble is that they have put out of action seven of the eight French battleships which we Germans ought to have been able to use against them, and that they keep on bombing our munition factories, aerodromes, dockyards and railways as though they thought that would stop us. They may upset our plans a little, and make our German home folk feel uncomfortable. They are also pestering the Italians who are not much good anyhow, but

we can't yet afford to do without them. Then there is South-Eastern Europe. Stalin doesn't seem to be playing our good German game; though he may not love the British any more than we love them. If we could make trouble between Russia and the Turks it would be first-rate. Only we don't want Stalin to put a spoke in our wheel when we set it rolling towards the Near East.

'If we go all out against England'—my hypothetical Hitler or Goering may reflect—'and don't succeed in smashing her, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and France might think we had caught a Tartar. Then they might give trouble. Would it be better to go on worrying the British with minor air-raids while we clean up South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans? Or would it be better to knock England out first? If we go for South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans first, the British will have time to get stronger. On the other hand, it won't be altogether easy to satisfy Mussolini in South-Eastern Europe without disturbing Stalin. We have got to do something, though where and when to strike our next blow is a bit of a puzzle.'

Hitler, who may or may not reason in this way, has been conferring with Count Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law and Foreign Minister, at Munich, and both of them have had a meeting with the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary of Hungary. From what has been said in Hungary since the meeting, it looks as though she had been told to keep quiet and to bide her time because Hitler wants to keep the Balkans from giving trouble while he deals with Great Britain. Mussolini may now have been brought into line with this idea, though a short time ago it looked as if he would have preferred to let Hungary and Bulgaria carve up Roumania. Unless Hungary takes Transylvania, and Bulgaria takes the Roumanian territory south of the Danube which is known as the Dobrudja, Mussolini is believed to fear that Russia may not be content with Bukovina and Bessarabia and might try to control the whole of Roumania. Though Germany would be glad to bring Russia into conflict with Turkey, Mussolini fears that this might result in Russian control of the Dardanelles.

How much or how little truth there is in these reports it is quite impossible to say. We know only that the Roumanian Foreign Minister is going to Munich. Nor can we accept as

altogether truthful the statement, made in Berlin, that Hitler is still determined to 'dispose of' Great Britain before the Balkan problem is tackled. Hitler may be rather like a juggler who is trying to keep three or four balls in the air at the same time without dropping any of them. The heaviest and hardest ball to manage is the Russian. Mussolini, for his part, may feel a little doubtful about the size and the value of the pickings Italy would get if Hitler were to have things all his own way.

We are watching these exercises between the Dictators with keen interest and without undue apprehension. We do not think that Hitler can knock us out, though he may try to do so. And if he should try, we fancy that Germany might get a headache in the process. I cannot help thinking that the action the British Government felt bound to take in order to prevent the big French battleships from falling into Hitler's hands has upset his calculations very considerably. For one thing he cannot hope to assemble in the near future any naval force—German, French or Italian—that could cover a German landing in Great Britain, or even in Ireland, against the undiminished power of the British Navy. For another thing the moral effect of the British action has been felt in Turkey, and in many other countries which might otherwise have been tempted to believe that we had been hopelessly crippled by the surrender of France. In Egypt and the Near East the disarmament of the French warships at Alexandria by friendly agreement with the British, the fraternization of British and French sailors there, and the severe mauling which the Italian warships and aircraft have suffered in Tripoli, have also had a marked effect. And though the British Admiral in command of our naval forces in the Mediterranean has expressed 'disappointment' that the engagement with the Italian battle fleet last Tuesday could not be pressed home, the countries bordering on the Mediterranean will have been impressed by the 'discretion' of the Italian Commander. All in all we have certainly not lost prestige in the Mediterranean region, or indeed in the world, during the past fortnight.

This does not mean that the surrender of France, and the betrayal of the Allied cause by Marshal Pétain's Government, have not filled us with sorrow. We mourn for her people who are now beginning to realize how completely that betrayal has put them into the power of Germany. They

cannot answer the galling boast of Dr. Robert Ley, one of Hitler's lieutenants, that Hitler has now restored and improved upon the work of Charlemagne who, at the end of the eighth century, made his Empire of the Western Franks, or France, master of the Eastern Franks or Germany. On the death of Charlemagne, Dr. Ley argued, these two sister nations fell apart and made war upon each other for a thousand years. Now Hitler has united them again and they will fight each other no more. Only, unlike Charlemagne, Hitler has brought the Western Franks, or France, under the sway of the Eastern Franks, or Germany. There they will remain in Hitler's new Europe.

This boast is only one of the Nazi efforts to rub into the fallen French a sense of their hopeless humiliation. On Wednesday the effort was carried two steps farther. French politicians who were among the leading traitors were roundly told by Hitler's organs that they must expect no mercy because they did not side with Germany soon enough or openly enough; and on the same day the French Chamber and Senate of Vichy were constrained to pass sentence of death upon the Third Republic and to give Marshal Pétain full powers to erect a rump totalitarian French State upon its ruins. Eighty French Members of Parliament had the courage to vote against this signing and sealing of their country's capitulation. One trembles to think of the fate that may be in store for them.

Meanwhile we have given a proof of a different temper, a proof of which I, for one, feel heartily proud. Last Monday night, while listening to the French radio service of the B.B.C., I heard General de Gaulle, leader of the French Volunteer Legion in Great Britain, deliver an impassioned protest against any tendency in this country to look upon the disabling of the battleship *Dunkerque*, and other French warships at Oran, as a British naval victory. He said:

'There is not a Frenchman who has learnt without grief and anger that units of the French Fleet have been sunk by our Allies. That grief and that anger come from our very hearts. . . . Therefore, speaking to the British people, I ask them to spare us and to spare themselves any interpretation of this tragedy as a direct naval success.'

General de Gaulle went on to explain that the French ships at Oran were not in a position to fight and that, in the

circumstances, their destruction was not the result of a battle. But he admitted that the enemy would have used them either against Great Britain or against the French Empire, and that it was better that they should have been destroyed. The French Government at Bordeaux or Vichy, he said, are playing the part of slaves. Taking the tragedy of Oran for what it is—a deplorable and detestable affair—it must not result in moral opposition between the British and the French. And General de Gaulle concluded:

‘The British people cannot but realize that there could be no victory for them if the soul of France should go over to the enemy. French people worthy of the name cannot but understand that the defeat of Great Britain would seal for ever their enslavement. Whatever has happened, even if one of the two has for a time fallen under the yoke of the common enemy, our two ancient peoples, our two great peoples, remain bound to one another. As for those Frenchmen who are still free to act according to honour, I say on their behalf, once and for all, that they have taken their hard decision. Once and for all they have decided to fight.’

Not only was this outspoken statement broadcast freely from London but it was printed in English next day by the British press. By no stretch of imagination can it be supposed that Hitler or Mussolini would have allowed anything of the kind to be broadcast freely from a German or Italian radio station. We honour General de Gaulle for having done it, and we honour our Government for having let him do it. He has well earned his recognition as our Ally.

So have the gallant Czechoslovaks. Hitherto their National Committee under President Beneš in London has not been recognized technically as an Allied Government. Now it is officially stated that a proposal so to recognize it is under favourable consideration and may shortly be announced. The way in which Czechoslovak regiments fought their way out of France, until they could be rescued by the British Navy, is one of the most thrilling stories of the war. Now they are safe in England, together with a number of Czechoslovak airmen who had won honour in France. One can imagine the heartening effect the recognition of their National Committee as an Allied Government will have upon the downtrodden Czechoslovak people in Central Europe. It will not please Hitler; but, after all, we are not out to please Hitler.

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While we await Hitler's decision whether and when to attack us, we can hardly do better than recall a passage in a speech made by Pitt on April 25, 1804, at a time when Napoleon was expected to invade England. Pitt said:

'We have for ourselves the great duty of self-preservation to perform; but the duty of the people of England now is of a nobler and higher order. We are in the first place to provide for our safety against a foe whose malignity to this country knows no bounds, but this is not to close our views or our efforts in so sacred a cause. Amid the wreck and misery of nations it is our just boast that we have continued superior to all that ambition or despotism could effect, and our still higher boast ought to be that we provide not only for our own safety but hold out a prospect to nations, now bending under the iron yoke of tyranny, of what the exertions of a free people can effect, and that at least in this corner of the world the name of liberty is still cherished and sanctified.'

This is our spirit today. Nothing that Hitler can do will break it.

THE SPIRIT OF PITT

An address to the nation and to the world which Mr. Winston Churchill broadcast on July 14 breathed Pitt's spirit. Some of its passages ran:

'We await undismayed the impending assault. Perhaps it will come tonight. Perhaps it will come next week. Perhaps it will never come. We must show ourselves equally capable of meeting a sudden, violent shock or a prolonged vigil. But be the ordeal sharp or long, or both, we shall seek no terms, we shall tolerate no parley. We may show mercy; we shall ask none.

'Hitler has not yet been withstood by a great nation with a will-power the equal of his own. Many countries have been poisoned by intrigue before they were struck down by violence. They have been rotted from within before they were smitten from without. How else can you explain what has happened to France? But here in our island we are in good health and good heart. We have seen how Hitler prepared in scientific detail the plans for destroying the neighbour countries of Germany. We may therefore be sure that there

is a plan, perhaps built up over years, for destroying Great Britain which has the honour to be his main enemy. All I can say is that any plan for invading Britain which he had made two months ago must have had to be entirely recast in order to meet our new position.'

Mr. Churchill explained that we had in our island a stronger army than we had ever had before—a million and a half men in the British Army under arms, and behind these, more than a million Local Defence Volunteers. But he bade us prepare for 1941 and 1942 when the war would cease to be merely defensive. He went on:

'Should the invader come, there will be no lying down of the people in submission as we have seen in other countries. We shall defend every village, town and city. The vast mass of London itself, fought street by street, could easily devour an entire hostile army, and we would rather see London laid in ruin and ashes than that it should be tamely and abjectly enslaved. . . . This is no war of chieftains or princes, of dynasties or national ambitions. It is a war of peoples and causes. There are vast numbers not only in this Island but in every land who will render faithful service in this way, but whose names will never be known, whose deeds will never be recorded. This is the war of the Unknown Warriors. Let all strive without failing in faith or in duty, and the dark curse of Hitler will be lifted from our age.'

In my talk on July 19 I commented on this address, saying:

The biggest event of the past week was, I think, Mr. Winston Churchill's broadcast to the world last Sunday. In its way it was comparable to the air-raids which our pilots have carried out by day and night over Germany and German bases in Holland, Belgium and France. These raids, and particularly the wrecking of the Dortmund-Ems canal, have disturbed, even if they have not altogether upset, German plans for the invasion of this country. The Prime Minister's address was an 'air-raid' of another kind. Ever since the collapse of France, Hitler has been preparing a peace offensive against Great Britain. It might already have been in full swing if the Prime Minister's address had not upset it. If and when the peace offensive comes, it may have to take another form; for

it is not much good to lay obvious peace traps for the head of a Government who tells our people to prepare not only for next winter or for 1941 but for 1942 when the war will, he believes, take a different form from the defensive in which it has hitherto been bound.

I am heartily glad that Mr. Winston Churchill should take a long view of things. The difficulty, in these days of war, and of waiting for attack that may come at any moment, is to get away from short views and to see the whole issue in perspective. And whenever I hear that Mr. Winston Churchill has gone off to inspect defences or naval bases instead of being cooped up in Downing Street with his nose on the grindstone, I feel he has done well. He is a very hard worker—as his secretaries soon find out—but he probably knows that deep, clear thought is doubly difficult amid the constant interruptions and the pressure of details that beset any Minister in his office. I wonder, even, whether his radio address would have been so good if he had not spent a little time in the country, ruminating over things, before he delivered it.

Next to Mr. Churchill's address I suppose that the nomination of Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt as Democratic candidate for the Presidency of the United States has been the most important event of the week. It is not for foreigners to pry into the rights or the wrongs of a third term for any President of the United States. That is solely a matter for American citizens to judge. But I have seen three or four Presidents of the United States at work, and I cannot imagine that after eight years of office any man in his senses would want to spend another four years on that terrific job if he could decently get out of it. So I feel quite sure that President Roosevelt did not seek re-nomination. And if he were to be re-elected I feel certain that nothing short of the most imperative sense of his duty to his own country would make him want to bring it into the war. Short of this I believe that he and the great majority of his people—including Mr. Wendell Willkie, the Republican candidate—are and will be heart and soul on the side of the cause of freedom, and will wish to give it all the material support in their power.

Neither they nor we can know how things will turn even in the near future. If any President of the United States desired to keep his country out of war more ardently than President

Roosevelt desires it, it was President Woodrow Wilson who was re-elected to the Presidency in November 1916 on the plea that he had kept the country out of war. Yet in April 1917 he found himself constrained to declare war against Germany. The late Lord Northcliffe, who knew the United States well, was sent to Washington in the summer of 1917 to co-ordinate arrangements for Anglo-American co-operation in that war. He asked a number of prominent Americans to tell him why a country so distant from Europe, so prosperous and so wedded to a policy of isolation, had decided to intervene in a European war. None of the answers satisfied him until he met one of the wisest of Americans, the late President Lowell of Harvard University. He answered Northcliffe by saying: 'There is no logical explanation. We have been driven to intervene by an obscure instinct of self-preservation.'

I found this answer the other day among my papers, in a memorandum which Northcliffe sent me at the time; and I do not believe that the American people today would act very differently from the way they acted in 1917 if a similar instinct of self-preservation should lead them to a similar conclusion. But we, and they, have to remember that the issues are now far more complicated than they seemed to be twenty-three years ago. Then the German threat to South America was by no means so tangible as it might soon become if Great Britain were less resolute than she is, and if Nazi Germany could get hold of West Africa after the defeat of Belgium and France. On the other hand Japan was an ally in 1917, and gave the United States no immediate cause to fear for the future safety of the Pacific Ocean. China had not been invaded and, in great part, overrun; nor did the Dutch East Indies come into the picture because Holland was then neutral. The concentration of a great part of the American Navy in the Pacific seems to show that today the United States feels the need for vigilance, while the war effort of Australia and New Zealand proves that the watchfulness of those sturdy British Dominions is not confined to affairs in Europe. Like Canada, Australia and New Zealand have sent us splendid contingents of magnificent men to help in the defence of Great Britain, and pilots of rare daring and skill to take part in our aerial warfare against Germany. Yet their very presence here is a constant reminder that our thoughts,

too, must travel round the world, and that their home security must be our own care as well as theirs.

These reflections bring me to an episode which has caused some degree of uneasiness among our people. This episode is the British agreement with Japan upon the temporary closing of the Burma Road to supplies for the armies of independent China. I am not in the secrets of our Government and cannot pretend to judge how far its policy is justified. I think only that the men who are responsible for taking decisions that may have very wide bearings are entitled to the benefit of any doubt there may be. The Prime Minister declined to say on Thursday whether or not the United States is in full agreement with the course our Government has felt bound to take. A statement was published in London last Wednesday, on what ought to have been good authority, that the British Government had frankly informed the United States of the British view, and that the American Government appeared to appreciate the reasons for it. Therefore, it was added, some surprise was at first felt in London when the American Secretary of State, Mr. Cordell Hull, announced that the United States considers the temporary closing of the Burma Road to war materials for the Chinese army 'would constitute an unwarranted interposition of obstacles to world trade.'

Since the Anglo-Japanese agreement was reached, and Mr. Cordell Hull's announcement was made, the formation of a new Cabinet in Japan, under pressure from the army, has somewhat altered the complexion of affairs. As far as I can gather it is not believed in London that this change of complexion foreshadows complications in the Far East. But since it is clear, in any event, that American interests are involved in that region quite as plainly as British interests, it would seem that the arguments in favour of a close understanding between Washington and London must carry as much weight with American as with British statesmen. There is widespread sympathy in Great Britain with the struggle of China against Japanese invasion; but with the war in Europe against Nazism and Fascism on our hands it strikes us as hardly fair that the stress of the Far Eastern situation should be borne by ourselves alone.

While these—geographically—distant contingencies are under consideration, our thoughts about Europe have been turning to a problem that lies closer to our own shores. It

concerns the form that will have to be given to a Europe of which a great part is now dominated by Hitler. Even when Nazism and Fascism have been overthrown, and freedom restored to the stricken European nations, it is hardly conceivable that the European continent should revert to its pre-war arrangements. The course of this war has proved that unlimited national sovereignties, and attempts to exercise those sovereignties by preserving neutrality, are altogether out of date, and that some kind of international co-ordination will be indispensable. An American writer recently diagnosed in the following words the sickness of democratic Europe. 'If the democracies,' he wrote, 'are merely trying to save something old . . . they are indeed beaten, and people in the end will conclude that the ruthless logic of life has passed them by.' Half the strength of Hitler lies in the fact that his system is inspired by a revolutionary passion so to mould the future that the greater part of Europe may be unified under German domination for the sole profit of Germany. This passion for European unity appeals to some short-sighted people, even among those who have little love for Hitler, as holding out a prospect of something better than the anarchy of the past ten years. There are few such people in Great Britain; but on the continent there are undoubtedly tendencies to look upon Hitler as a brutal sort of saviour, much as Woodrow Wilson was hailed, twenty-two years ago, by a world in despair, as the herald of a new age and a saviour of a better sort.

The people who take this view can have little notion of what Hitler understands by the unification of Europe. He intends it to be spoliation and enslavement for all non-Germans and for many Germans. But we, who mean to withstand and to overcome Hitler in the political and moral sphere no less than in the military, have to work out a plan and a policy for the co-ordination of Europe on a basis of equal freedom for all, and of liberation from future war. The liberal and democratic nations, or their statesmen, have to think out a scheme under which the position of the smaller peoples in Europe would not be that of pawns in a game of power-politics, but that of peoples drawing strength from the common resources, material and moral, of Europe as a whole. Any such scheme must involve a new conception of the duties of nations to each other, as well as of their national rights. It will have to make provision for an international

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economic authority provided with a European restoration and development fund. And since there can be no prosperity for Europe so long as her peoples squander their substance on armaments, disarmament will be an absolute necessity, together with an international police force, probably an air force, to maintain respect for law and order and to make sure that none shall be oppressed.

Many thoughtful minds in this country are now convinced that only by working out, and making known, a constructive policy for the co-ordination of Europe on a basis of freedom and co-operation in peace shall we find a convincing answer to Hitler's plan for unifying Europe and dominating the world on a basis of servitude to Germany. We have, in a word, to overcome a bad revolution by a good revolution. We have to put a new ideal before those nations, including considerable portions of the German and the Italian peoples, that might be ready to rise against Nazi and Fascist tyranny were they not appalled by the prospect of the hopeless misery and social collapse that would follow the destruction of Hitlerism merely by force of arms. We have to give Europe and the world new and positive hope, and not only a prospect of political liberation.

I, indeed, should not be surprised if some vision of this necessity lay behind Mr. Winston Churchill's broadcast statement last Sunday. When he said that 'while we toil through the dark valley we can see the sunlight on the uplands beyond,' he may well have had a new and constructive future in his mind. And I think that this hope inspired him when he concluded that if we hold fast in this 'war of peoples and of causes,' if 'all strive, without failing in faith or in duty, the dark curse of Hitler will be lifted from our age.'

ARMED VIGIL

The prospect of German attack or invasion was again the principal theme of my talk on July 26, which gave some account of the growing preparedness of the country to resist the enemy whenever and however he might come. It ran:

The great attack on this country, which—according to Hitler—is to destroy Great Britain and the British Empire, has not yet been made. Even in Germany there would seem to be

some doubt about it. Hitler's newspapers have been telling us, day after day, that 'the die is now cast,' and that we may expect obliteration at any moment. On the other hand the German people are being told different tales. One is that the destruction of Great Britain will be so trifling an item in Hitler's great plan that there need be no hurry. Another tale is that the job is not altogether easy, and needs careful preparation. A more urgent matter, it is explained, is so to rearrange South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans that everything there may be in apple-pie order before the British are put out of the way. And this is why—according to the same explanation—the Roumanian and the Bulgarian representatives have been 'invited' to hear words of wisdom from Hitler and Ribbentrop at Salzburg. If I know anything of South-Eastern Europe it will not be a very happy party.

One British journal, which is not always badly informed, gives yet another explanation. It is that Hitler's principal advisers are not in agreement about the attack on Great Britain. Goering, Goebbels and Field-Marshal Keitel, the Chief of Staff, are reported to be insisting that the great attack must not be launched; while Ribbentrop, Hitler's Foreign Secretary, and Himmler, the Chief of the Gestapo or Secret State Police, demand that we be invaded at once. If this explanation is well-founded it would not be the first time that Hitler has been confronted with conflicting views. When this has happened in the past he has usually held his hand, taken no immediate decision, and looked round for an easier task than the one in dispute. This may be happening again.

Whether or not, as is now stated, Goering, Goebbels and Keitel think the risk of failure in an attempt to invade Great Britain (including the risk to their own reputations and to the German hold upon conquered countries) forbids an early onslaught upon us, it is quite certain that the risk to Germany would be very considerable. I have never seen such a transformation as that which has been wrought in Great Britain during the past few weeks. Without giving away military secrets (which, in point of fact, are quite unknown to me), I can say that there is not a town, a village, or a hamlet in those parts of England I have recently visited that would not be able and ready to give invaders a very warm reception indeed. And I have not been in the most strongly defended parts of

the country. The other day there was a call for men, not engaged in military service of any kind, to help in digging trenches and in building other defensive works. Every man who had a spade, a shovel or a pickaxe turned out at once and did the job without more ado. So keen are our folk to look after Hitler's people, or any secret pro-Nazis there may conceivably be, that it is not easy to go even a few miles in country districts without being challenged and required to prove one's identity. If Hitler has got any spies in Great Britain, and if they are worth their pay, he must know by this time that a rolled-up hedgehog is more agreeable to handle than his invaders would find our people to be.

Then there are other trifles that may have upset him. He has undoubtedly been making huge preparations to smash us by air attack, to invade us by sea, and to be otherwise disobliging. But our aircraft have found out where these preparations were going on, and have bombed those places with strict impartiality and complete lack of sympathy. As a very cool-minded expert wrote last Wednesday:

'Night after night, and often in daylight, Bomber and Coastal Command aircraft have done widespread damage to [German or German-controlled] docks, harbours, bases, aerodromes, and road, rail, and water transport systems. They have also hammered away at the munition and aircraft factories, ammunition dumps, and fuel storage tanks. Material which has taken weeks to get together has often been wiped out in a few minutes' bombing.'

On the principle that prevention is better than cure, this is good work. And it has another advantage besides that of compelling Hitler to rearrange his plans. Not even the severe Nazi control over the German press has been able to stop the publication and public discussion of demands for the evacuation, from parts of the Rhineland and of North-Western Germany, of the civilian population that finds no pleasure in the attention paid by British—and recently also by some French—airmen to military objectives in those regions. Hitler may proclaim himself victor over half Europe, and hold out a glittering prospect of the day when the great Nazi Reich shall have destroyed Britain and the British Empire. But this prospect affords little consolation to Germans in Germany who receive, nightly and daily, ocular and oral proof that British aircraft are not yet destroyed. I have

a notion that such proof will be offered to more and more Germans as time goes on. Then Hitler may find it necessary to take the risk of trying to hit back on a large scale. And when he finds, as he will find, that he can neither smash nor dishearten us, his Germans, and the many millions of non-Germans who writhe under his brutal heel, will begin to wonder how long his Great Nazi Reich is going to last.

Some of those millions are wondering already. In Holland the Dutch people show no enthusiasm whatever for their Nazi oppressors, and have been rebuked for ingratitude. The Polish refugees who escaped to Roumania last autumn when their country was overrun, and have recently been driven back to what was their own country, prefer to go to the regions occupied by Soviet Russia than to those under German sway. They may not love the Russians but they hate the Germans. In Bohemia and Moravia the passive resistance of the determined Czech people has been encouraged by the British recognition of President Beneš and the Czechoslovak National Committee as the Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia. I was glad to hear Mr. Butler, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Foreign Office, do justice, in a broadcast address the other evening, to the heroic qualities of the Czechoslovaks; though I could not quite forget that those qualities were every bit as admirable in October 1938, when their country was cut up by the 'Agreement' made at Munich in the hope of appeasing Hitler, as they are today.

Some people are also asking whether we were wise, at the beginning of last year, to throw a sop to Mussolini by recognizing the King of Italy as Emperor of Ethiopia, seeing that the Emperor himself, Hailé Selassié, has now been helped by us to return to the borders of his own country, in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, where he is beginning to organize the revolt of his people against Italian misrule.

Better late than never, at all events. Mussolini's African Empire is not passing through pleasant days, and may have days far more unpleasant to go through. How much will remain of it when it has gone through them is another question. If I may judge by a letter that has reached me from Kenya in East Africa, Italian prestige does not stand particularly high in that part of the world, even among Africans. My correspondent, whom I have not the pleasure of knowing, is a British veteran of the last war. He is disappointed

that at his age, and in view of the work he is doing, he should not be accepted for active service. He tells me of the way in which all the people in Kenya (Africans, Indians and Europeans) are pulling together and giving money and cattle as well as part of the maize crop to help the common cause. He and his staff are responsible for a passenger transport service which provides omnibus communication on various routes. He writes:

'Here is a true story to let you know what some of our (African) lads think of the Italians. (Two of my staff were with the Kenya Field Ambulance in Abyssinia during the Italian slaughter.) I was giving them a lecture on what to do in the event of an air-raid; and one of the orders was to stop the bus, get all passengers out, and then get them into a ditch or hole (we have plenty of them). One boy asked if he could get back into his bus when he had seen the passengers out. I said "Yes, but why?" His reply was: "Well, I don't mind the Italiano air-oplanes; they are rotten shots. But there might be a snake in the ditch, and I do mind that."'

So it seems pretty clear that the spirit of Britain is not confined to the Home Country. And it is very gratifying to note how strong this spirit is among our own people. It has come out during the past week in several ways. When Mr. Winston Churchill formed his National Government, last May, doubt was felt whether so comprehensive an Administration would be or could be effectively criticized in Parliament. Our people know quite well that political freedom consists in the right and the power to criticize and oppose the Government whenever the Government goes wrong or fails to do its full duty. Without an opposition, it was thought, Parliament would become a kind of rubber stamp in the Government's hands. This idea has been exploded during the past few days. Four or five weeks ago some over-zealous people in one or two of our Government Departments took it into their heads to order the internment of all 'enemy aliens,' no matter whether or not they were political refugees and proved enemies of Hitler and Mussolini. Little by little the injustice of this decision became clear to the press, the public and to members of Parliament. A running fire of criticism and opposition was kept up on the Departments concerned, with the result that the Home Secretary has now admitted that mistakes have been made. He has had to order

the release of some of Hitler's and Mussolini's enemies and to promise consideration for each individual case on its merits.

Then the desirability of checking foolish rumours led another Department to call for what it termed a 'Silent Column' of people who would say nothing about the war except in order to assure everybody that everything was going beautifully, and would look out for despondent talk. Some silly chatterers were severely punished by magistrates or judges. Parliament got busy about these things—with the result that Mr. Winston Churchill coined a phrase which will long be remembered. He buried the 'Silent Column' with a mock solemnity that amused and gratified the House of Commons. The scheme, he said, looked attractive enough on paper, but in practice it came to be regarded as positively discouraging. Reasonable discussion of the war that did not help the enemy, directly or indirectly, was just what the Government wanted. So he announced that the 'Silent Column' would disappear or, as he put it, would fall into an 'innocuous desuetude.'

Another fluttering bird, which might have been much less 'innocuous,' has also had its wings clipped by Parliament. The Home Secretary proposed to set up Special Tribunals which, in the event of invasion, could deal summarily with offenders and even condemn them to death without appeal. Parliament soon 'got after him.' It did not deny the need for special tribunals in an emergency, but it did object strongly to the idea of giving them power to sentence people to death without appeal. So the Home Secretary was obliged to agree that death sentences and other serious penalties inflicted by Special Tribunals shall be properly reviewed on appeal.

In this way Parliament has vindicated the rights of individuals to justice even in time of war and under the shadow of possible invasion. This, I think, is a very healthy sign. It shows that we are not to be stampeded. Another healthy sign is the general feeling, in and outside Parliament, that the stiff interim budget introduced last Tuesday by the Chancellor of the Exchequer does not go far enough. We want to put all we can into the war, to hold nothing back. The sooner every member of the Government understands this, the stronger will the Government be.

Our people mean to beat Hitler and Mussolini. They mean

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to beat them in freedom and for the sake of freedom. They don't care how long it may take or how much it will cost. They know that the world won't be a decent place to live in until the job has been done. And they are going to do it.

GUSTS BEFORE THE STORM

On August 2 our 'watchful waiting' had not been interrupted by any attempt at invasion, though we had been given a foretaste of sustained attack by air. So I said:

Here we are at the beginning of August. According to programme Hitler ought to be dictating terms of surrender to Great Britain in London on 15 August. He had said that he would be in Paris on 15 June, and he was actually there a day earlier. But hitherto we have not seen any clear proof of a belief on his part that he will be able to keep his self-made appointment with us in London by mid-August; and we are not even sure that the delay in the execution of his programme is merely another application of the psychological technique which he usually employed at his big propagandist meetings in Germany. Then he was in the habit of keeping his audiences waiting for an hour or more, so as to heighten their expectations and to make them more impatient to see and to hear him. We are not impatient either to see or to hear him; and if he hopes, by delay, to put our nerves on edge he will be a little disappointed.

During the past week he has tried to send us a fairly large number of messengers—not, indeed, of good will but as travellers bringing specimens of frightfulness. Our airmen and anti-aircraft batteries have lacked courtesy to the point of treating these messengers without ceremony. In the course of the past month more than 600 of them, and no fewer than 240 of their aircraft, have stayed with us. A good many others may have failed to return home. We do not know how much or how little sincerity there is in the explanations given by Hitler's German and Italian mouthpieces that the conquest of Great Britain is no easy undertaking, and that a war of attrition will be needed to wear us down. There is no sense, say these mouthpieces, in asking when the great attack on England is going to begin; it has already begun, and the

British are shaking in their shoes at the awful losses they have already suffered.

I feel enough respect for the cunning of Hitler, Goebbels and other Nazi propagandists to believe that there is method alike in their threats to obliterate Great Britain by a lightning stroke, and in their present talk of a war of attrition. The story that we should be smashed and compelled to surrender by the middle of August was, I think, calculated to influence neutral countries in both hemispheres and to make them believe that though we might withstand the German onslaught we were really doomed, and that any attempt to help us would be a forlorn hope. If anything like this were Hitler's aim he has not entirely failed to achieve it. A good many of our well-wishers in various parts of the world have been sadly awaiting dire tidings of our downfall, and have therefore been tempted to think that any positive help they might have been inclined to give us would come too late and had better not be wasted in a vain effort to succour the British outpost of Western civilization. And these good people are not even aware that their minds and thoughts have been swayed by a peculiarly astute form of Nazi propaganda.

If Hitler's lightning war of annihilation does not 'come off,' we may get more propaganda on the 'war of attrition' theory. One object of this propaganda would be to put us off our guard. Another object will no doubt be to persuade the German people that the British Empire is a hard nut to crack, and that time will be needed to crack it. The other day I got a digest of the Nazi periodical that is devoted to 'Geopolitik' or 'Geopolitics,' a school of thought to which Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Hess, has always belonged. Its head, General Haushofer, is a very influential adviser of Hitler on world affairs. Last May this periodical outlined several of the ideas that have since been put forward by Dr. Goebbels and by Hitler himself; but its most interesting pages deal with Great Britain and the British Commonwealth. Between Germany and England as world powers, says this periodical, stands England's dominant maritime position, and Germany's task is to break what it calls the British political world monopoly. Other peoples besides Germany are fighting this monopoly. Thus the antagonism between Germany and Great Britain grows into the antagonism of other nations towards England. Yet—the argument goes on—'it would be

a great mistake to underrate England and to draw a one-sided picture of her weakness to encourage ourselves.' And, whatever points of weakness there may be in England herself, the strength of the British Empire is really astonishing. Then follows textually this remarkable statement:

'Of what, in reality, does the miracle and high organization of the English monopoly consist? Above all, in an infinitely complicated, hundredfold-graded structure; in its ubiquity and, simultaneously, its indivisibility; in the dynamics of its lines of power. If only one part of the whole magnetic structure, the white British Dominions, is considered, a feeling of astonishment prevails that these blocks, strewn across the whole world, without any kind of State constitution, without any fixed organization or hierarchy—apart from the common Crown—are held together only by free conferences and an exchange of notes in a union which, it is true, is no longer unchallenged and certainly stands or falls with England's ability to defend her daughter countries.'

This remarkable passage, written of course not for the German public but for the inner circle of the initiated into the mysteries of 'Geopolitics,' has for me a special and almost a personal interest. In November 1926 the Inter-Imperial Conference of Dominion and British delegates in London adopted a Report which had been drawn up by the late Lord Balfour on 'Inter-Imperial relations.' A few days later I happened to be in Berlin where I was asked to address the professors and students of the Berlin 'High School for Politics' upon the Report which the Germans called 'the New Constitution of the British World-Empire.' I accepted the invitation and spoke upon 'The Method of Freedom' as the secret of the 'British World-Empire.' Several hundred students cheered lustily, but their professors seemed to be suffering something like physical discomfort. One of them, indeed, presently rose and ridiculed the 'method of freedom' as Utopian, and asked me to explain how any empire could possibly exist without a 'central force' to overawe and to coerce its members. Where, he inquired in a tone of triumphant sarcasm, was there such a 'central force' in the fabulous British World-Empire? How I answered him, to the obvious satisfaction of the students, is a minor matter. But I am particularly interested today in noting that some inkling of the spontaneous cohesion of the British Commonwealth

has begun to haunt the minds even of Hitler's 'geopolitical' mentors.

In fact, the plain issue in this war lies between the method of freedom and the method of coercion by a central force. After having overrun a good part of Europe by his method of coercion, Hitler finds himself up against the method of freedom in very tangible form. Directly and indirectly, he is now applying his method of coercion—or 'persuasion'—to South-Eastern Europe, and will no doubt apply it to the unfortunate people of France in the hope of constraining the ill-starred Government of Vichy to hand over to him and to Italy the French Empire in North Africa. In this way he may hope that he can win a 'war of attrition' against Great Britain, and gain a sufficient foothold on the Atlantic coasts of Africa to bring South America, at least, within effective range of his future operations. This may be why his agents did all they could to prevent the success of the Inter-American Havana Conference. He does not like the method of free association between independent peoples, small and great. For, as the same 'geopolitical' review from which I have quoted points out in another passage, there is no room for small peoples in the future German organization of the world. This future, it says, belongs to the 'aspiring large-space peoples' like Germany, Italy and Japan whose aim is 'one united attack on English monopoly.'

I think it is well to reflect, from time to time, upon the underlying tendencies of which current events are symptoms on the surface. Otherwise the impact of those events may bewilder us and upset our perspective. If I had to name off-hand what seem to me the most important events of the past week I should say, first, the Havana Conference; second, the United States embargo upon aviation spirit for Japan and other countries outside the Western hemisphere; third, the extension of the British blockade; and fourth the arrival in Kenya of the South African field force. I do not read the embargo on North American aviation spirit as an unfriendly gesture towards Great Britain. Rather do I look upon it as a footnote to the Japanese arrests of Britons and others, and to the announcement of a Japanese policy aiming at the establishment of a 'new order' in 'Great Eastern Asia.' This war has gone far beyond the point at which it might have been—short-sightedly—viewed as a struggle for mastery in Europe.

It is becoming, if it has not already become, something bigger even than a world-wide fight between the British Commonwealth on the one hand and the forces of German, Italian and Japanese expansionism on the other. If, in one sense, it is a fight for and against the 'method of freedom' in the future organization of the world, the fight is British only because the people of the British Commonwealth and of the British Empire form the main garrison that is holding the fort for the principles of freedom, and because they are determined, and feel able, to hold it as long as may be necessary to break the power of those who assail it. It is, in my belief, quite misleading to judge our prospects solely in terms of material strength and economic or financial resources. They need to be judged above all in terms of moral steadfastness, of spiritual aspiration, of an unflinching resolve to rid the world and its peoples of the deadly menace to which the infernal deeds and doctrines of Germany and her associates expose them. When a Commonwealth of free peoples have made up their minds, as the British Commonwealth of peoples have made up their minds, that it would be better to suffer obliteration or annihilation than to be false in word or deed to the great human truths which have inspired them in the past and inspire them today, there can be no thought of compromise, or surrender, or of anything except final victory.

When I say this I do not mean that we are without blemish or blame. We are paying heavily for past errors. We are redeeming them with blood and toil and sacrifice. I could find it in my heart to wish that those who speak for us had already put forward a clearer and more positive conception of the purposes for which we fight than they have yet found time to do. We are resolved to abolish international anarchy, not by submitting to Hitler's imperialism but through a Union of Free Peoples and a Confederation of States all of whom shall be animated by the will to work for the common weal and to suppress the crime of war as an instrument of national policy. I should have been glad to hear some British voice answer Hitler's last oration by putting to him some searching questions, asking him whether he has accomplished or can accomplish aught save destruction, and whether the world he seeks to build would not be far more soulless than the world he is trying to destroy. Such a voice would have told him that we stand against him as the champions of a new

Europe, and another world, of free and united peoples to whom we shall be ready to offer that full and complete union with ourselves which the betrayers of France refused. This new Europe, this other world, will grow by process of liberation. It will extend the method of freedom until all that remains of the Nazi Third Reich may be some spot where Hitler will seek, perhaps in vain, refuge from the wrath of his own nation.

This is a time for faith, for vision, and for outspoken resolve. We celebrated on Thursday the two hundredth anniversary of our second National Anthem—'Rule, Britannia!'—and our people have been singing with conviction its proud third verse:

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke!
As the loud blast that tears the skies
Serves but to root thy native oak.

But they have been singing it with a new feeling in their hearts. To them it now means that Britannia's fighting mastery over the waves of sea and air shall be a pledge not only to her own children, but to others also, that when she has again withstood 'the loud blast that tears the skies' they, like us and with us, 'never shall be slaves.'

HITLER'S 'OUTSTRETCHED HAND'

Early in August Mr. Winston Churchill inspected the coastal defences of north-eastern England, and was satisfied with what he saw. Meanwhile German aircraft were dropping over the English countryside translations of a speech Hitler had made to his Reichstag on July 19. The speech was mainly directed against Mr. Winston Churchill who, Hitler said, had rejected the hand Hitler had held out to him for the sake of peace. The French people were now regretting their failure to grasp that hand, just as the British people would regret it when Hitler made his full reply which would bring upon them endless suffering and misery. Mr. Churchill, of course, would not worry about this because he would be in Canada. Really, said Hitler, Mr. Churchill ought for once to believe him when he said that a great Empire will be

destroyed, an Empire which Hitler never intended to destroy or to harm. The continuation of this struggle could only end in the annihilation of Britain or Germany. 'Mr. Churchill' said Hitler, 'thinks it will be Germany. I know it will be Britain. I am not a vanquished foe begging for mercy. I speak as a victor. I can see no reason why this war must go on. We should like to avert sacrifices which must claim millions. It is possible that Mr. Churchill will once again brush aside this statement of mine by saying that it is merely born of fear and doubt of victory. In that case I shall have relieved my conscience of the things to come.'

By way of comment I said on August 8:

Hitler and Dr. Goebbels have been up to some funny tricks during the past few days. They have gone on dropping copies of Hitler's speech of July 19 to the Reichstag in many parts of the country; and they have given quite an amusing twist to the truthful story that our people have been picking up these copies and selling them to curiosity hunters for the benefit of the Red Cross. On Wednesday, for instance, the German wireless announcer from Bremen told the people of Holland that so great was British interest in Hitler's speech that as much as ten shillings was being offered for a copy of it. Men, said this worthy, were risking their necks in climbing trees to bring down the precious document from the topmost branches; and the cry of the English people was: 'Hitler has not sent us enough copies of his speech.'

This piece of German news is both admirable and unusual. The facts it relates are true. People have been climbing trees to get the leaflets which have been sold for as much as ten shillings a copy. And the ardent collectors for the Red Cross have complained that Hitler has not sent us enough copies of his speech for them to sell. The only detail which the German announcer missed was that nobody has been prosecuted or imprisoned for gathering specimens of Hitler's prose, whereas anybody who read British leaflets in Germany, or who was caught listening to the British wireless, got short shrift from Hitler's Gestapo. Nor, so far as I am aware, has any mayor of a British borough thought it necessary to emulate the cunning of a mayor in Czechoslovakia who pinned a British leaflet on to the municipal notice board with the injunction: 'This must on no account be read.'

We are a very curious people indeed. I do not blame the Germans for not understanding our mental make-up; and I can quite believe that when we say we are not afraid of anything Hitler may try to do to us, a lot of folk outside these islands may think that we are pretending to be brave while we are really quaking in our shoes. But there is one piece of evidence which I find convincing, though I have not yet seen it mentioned anywhere. Within the past ten days my mail has included two or three published pamphlets and a large number of private memoranda upon the way in which peace ought to be organized when we have beaten Hitler. And I happen to know that all over the country this important subject is being quietly discussed as though Hitler's projected attack upon us didn't come into the picture at all. I am quite ready to admit that talk and writing of this kind may be premature; that we have first got to beat Hitler; but I cannot imagine that people would give themselves up to this sort of exercise if they were really quaking in their shoes or felt any doubt whatever about our beating Hitler.

When I was a young student in Germany I often heard the expression: 'Mad Englishman'; and Italians have a proverb to the effect that only Englishmen and dogs are mad enough to walk in the sun on a hot day. I should be the last to deny that we are, as a people, a trifle mad. But our madness has this about it: We do not believe that mechanized militarism and brutal force are the last word in human affairs. We think that force was made for man to use against tyranny, oppression and all kinds of evil, and we have got quite enough force in this country to withstand whatever force Hitler may bring against us. We know he may do us a lot of damage. We shall not enjoy being damaged. But we feel quite sure that we shall give Hitler better than he sends, and that then the nations whom he has crushed, and is robbing, will ask what is going to happen to him. And this is one reason why so many quiet folk among us are thinking less of his attack than of the kind of world we should like to fashion when he has been worsted.

The other day I heard an important man in a responsible position discussing the idea that when this war is over an international air force will be needed to police Europe and to make certain that no single nation or set of gangsters shall hold the others to ransom or make slaves of them. In the course of the conversation another man said: 'Has it not

struck you that the nucleus, at any rate, of this international air force already exists in Great Britain?' He went on to explain that Polish, Czechoslovak, French, American and other airmen are already with us in large numbers, and that the spirit of brotherhood between them and their comrades of the Royal Air Force is very remarkable. He thought that victory will, in the last resort, be won by an overwhelming air force animated by this spirit—a spirit which Hitler's men will never be able to match.

He may be right. For my part I can only say that I agree with Mr. J. B. Priestley who pointed out, not long ago, that our splendid young airmen, who are literally ready to give their lives for each other at any moment, will not be willing to go back into cut-throat competition in civil or business life after having tasted a life of self-sacrificing and efficient co-operation in defence of their own and others' freedom.

Nobody can tell what form things may take at the end of the war or even while the war is going on. Last Wednesday letters were exchanged between the Prime Minister and the recognized leader of free Frenchmen, General de Gaulle. In his letter Mr. Winston Churchill pledged His Majesty's Government 'when victory has been gained by the Allied arms, to secure the full restoration of the independence and greatness of France.' And he undertook to give all French volunteers special facilities to acquire British nationality, without prejudice to the restoration of any French rights, including national status, of which they may have been deprived as a result of their participation in the struggle against common enemies. General de Gaulle accepted the Prime Minister's letter as constituting an agreement in regard to these matters.

When I read these letters it struck me that the spirit which prompted our Government to offer full union to France before the surrender of Marshal Pétain and his colleagues is by no means dead, and that it will probably inspire arrangements of a similar kind with all our Allies as time goes on. It may end by creating an effective, dynamic union of free peoples which will give quite a new complexion to questions of frontier, of language, of economic self-sufficiency and a hundred and one other barriers to human intercourse. For there will be all the difference in the world between a voluntary union of free peoples and the obliteration of national

sovereignties by a destructive despot who aims only at his own enthronement as supreme slave-driver over a congeries of enslaved peoples.

Here I perceive that I am getting far away from the events of the week, though not altogether from world affairs. Among the events of the week the Italian invasion of British Somaliland looks unpleasant though, judged by the scale and standard of this war, it may be little more than a local incident. Even as a local incident the last word has by no means been said or heard about it. For the moment and, perhaps, for some time to come we need to judge the position in North-East Africa in the light of the French surrender to German dictates. That surrender has certainly complicated the position in more than one respect, and made our task much harder. But I should be very surprised if the armed forces of Italy, with or without German stiffening, were able to make things too hot for us to hold. Mussolini sadly needs a little prestige, and he may be as puzzled as Hitler seems to be where and how to find it without running dangerous risks. We are out for something much bigger than prestige. We want to make a decent world for decent folk to live in. Hitler knows this quite well. So I think he will try to smash us—and will not succeed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Mid-August to September 1940

IN the second week of August 1940 we knew that our own ordeal had begun. Waves of enemy bombers and fighters launched large-scale attacks in daylight on August 11 against our south-eastern channel coasts, shipping and captive balloons. An hour or two later 200 German aircraft raided Portland and Weymouth. Next day hundreds of German aircraft raided the coast from Kent to the Isle of Wight, and tried to bomb Portsmouth dockyard. Casualties were not heavy, and many of the raiders were brought down—62 in all. The Royal Air Force lost 13 machines, one pilot being saved.

The R.A.F. promptly retaliated, hitting German aircraft factories and aerodromes with good effect. But on August 13 several hundred German machines again bombed places between Hampshire and the Thames Estuary, with Southampton and R.A.F. aerodromes as their chief target. On that day the German losses were 78 machines (39 bombers and 39 fighters), and 13 British fighters were lost, with 10 pilots saved.

On August 14 there was a comparative lull. Only 31 German machines were shot down as against seven British, with two pilots saved. But on the morrow the German offensive was resumed with more than 1,000 aeroplanes instead of 500 or 600. The attack extended as far north as the Tyneside area. Of the raiders, 180 fell to the R.A.F. and to ground defences. British losses were 34 machines, with 17 pilots rescued.

So my talk on August 16 said:

It has been a great week—the first week of the battle of Britain. Other weeks may be greater. Hitler's attack may be intensified, but he did not come to London or dictate peace from Buckingham Palace on August 15. Instead he sent 1,000 or more aircraft to attack us. One hundred and eighty of them went down, as compared with 34—17 safe—of our own. Our airmen—fighters and bombers—have given him a taste of their quality throughout the week, and our anti-aircraft batteries have shown that they are up to their work. Mussolini, too, has got a black eye that he did not expect. Altogether it has been a great week.

I have made some inquiry into the accuracy of the figures officially given of the enemy's losses and of our own. This is a very important matter, in more ways than one. If our figures were untrustworthy, or were 'cooked' in any way, we—that is to say, the ordinary public of whom I am one—should resent it deeply. We should feel that we were being mollycoddled, that our authorities did not think we could face the music, that we might get panicky if we knew the truth. I don't know if this side of the matter is understood abroad. I do know that there has been much talk in other countries about the difference between the fantastic German figures and our own. If other countries like to believe that there 'must be something' in the German figures, and that we are hiding our own losses, let them believe it. As long as we tell the truth, other countries will only be fooling themselves, or letting themselves be fooled, if they don't believe it. But we, who are now in the war zone, should get very angry if we thought we were being hoodwinked. We know we can 'stand the racket,' however severe it may be.

So I have made some inquiry on my own account, and this is what I have found. Our official figures are understatements. If they err, they err on the side of caution. Every German loss and every British loss is verified, checked over and verified again before it is officially recognized. When we were told that on Tuesday 78 German aircraft had been destroyed, as compared with 13 of our own, a good case might have been made out for putting the German losses much higher. It was not made out because probabilities, even when they are so strong as to amount to practical certainties,

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are not reckoned. We can leave Hitler, and Goering, and the surviving airmen of the German squadrons, to do the reckoning. However Goebbels may twist and turn the figures he cannot humbug the German airmen. They know. And we have pretty good evidence that they do not like what they know.

Of course, the 'Battle of Britain' may be only beginning. According to reports from Germany we are to have a 'week-end of terror.' Somehow or other I don't quite believe in the 'terror.' One day this week something very characteristic happened. A German aeroplane, flying low, machine-gunned a group of navvies working near a field. A few moments later the aeroplane was brought down. Its crew were unhurt, but not unarmed. The navvies dropped their tools and went after the crew with uncharitable intent. Luckily for the crew some soldiers got there first and took them prisoner. Otherwise the German airmen would not have found much 'terror' in the navvies. Most of our people are like that. The enemy can succeed in filling them with honest wrath. But wrath and 'terror' are different emotions.

This week I have been reminded—negatively—of what I had felt in September 1916, on the British front in France, a day or two before the second battle of the Somme. Regiments were moving grimly up to their allotted positions for the impending offensive, and those of us who were not marching with them were conscious of a sense of frustration. An Australian poet who had been at the front a short time before put this feeling aptly in the lines:

And I felt like a man in a prison van,
While the rest of the world goes free.

One ached to be in the fighting line. The men in those regiments were free to fight and give their lives for something greater than themselves. We were not. But today we are. We are all more or less in the fighting line and should not feel that we were 'doing our bit' if we were not. We do not envy 'the rest of the world' in so far as it is noncombatant. We feel somehow that in these great days the breath of war is the breath of life, and the spirit of sacrifice is the spirit of regeneration.

Last week a correspondent, whom I have not the pleasure of knowing, sent me from Nova Scotia a cutting from a Canadian newspaper which charged Mr. J. B. Priestley, Mr.

Vernon Bartlett, and me in particular, with doing our job pitifully because we were not trying to enlist the aid of the United States democracy. Listening to our talks, this newspaper said, the average United States citizen might not unnaturally say to himself 'If there is no danger in England, if these raids are of small consequence, and there is no likelihood of invasion, why should we worry? Why should we send the last of our arms and munitions, let alone send troops?' What is wanted, concluded this journal, is more candour, 'more of a heart-to-heart talk from democracy to democracy.'

I am personally obliged to my Nova Scotia correspondent and to this Canadian journal. And I should like to clear up any misunderstanding there may be about what we, who talk from England, are really trying to do. We are not trying to 'put something over' on anybody. We are not engaged in propaganda. We are trying to tell the truth as we see it. What a 'heart-to-heart talk from democracy to democracy' may be I don't quite know. Our country, and Canada, together with the other British Dominions, the Empire and our Allies, are doing something better than talk about democracy. We are fighting for it, for our own freedom as individuals, for our free institutions, for the freedom of other peoples and for the chance—when we have put an end to Hitler and his villainy—of making the world a decent place for free men and nations to live in. We think it would be an impertinence, almost an insult, to the people of the United States to suggest what they should or should not do. We look upon them as a mature people, wise enough to decide their own course of action for themselves, without any prompting from foreigners, in the light of the facts. We think that our job is to give them what we believe to be the facts.

Now it is an unquestionable fact that during the past week our airmen and gunners have given Hitler's airmen a very bad time indeed. Another fact is that our bombers have made wide regions of Germany feel very uncomfortable. Hitler may dream of invading and conquering Britain. He may try to do it. He will not find it easy. Meanwhile our bombers are invading Germany day after day and night after night. They are also invading Italy—which Mussolini thought would be safe from our attentions when France surrendered. He thought also that he could afford to send Italian aircraft to help Hitler bomb England, and that we should not be able to

hit back. Yet the other night a considerable number of our bombers flew 1,600 miles to Turin, Milan and back, and made a sad mess of Mussolini's aircraft factories. These bombers crossed the high Alps twice, and all except one returned safely. The crew of that one were rescued when it had to make a forced landing near our coast on its way back.

No part of Germany is more distant from England than are the northern Italian cities. Hitler may go on attacking us, but he will feel in his bones that there is not a munitions or an aircraft factory in the whole of Germany that can be sure of escaping our bombers. We are not only on the defensive. We are also taking the offensive. As Air Marshal Lord Trenchard, one of the makers of the Royal Air Force, points out, Great Britain is not merely a 'fortress.' He writes: 'It ought to be called a base, the base of the British Empire which will carry on the war offensively against all the Nazi cult. . . . And this is the way the war will eventually be won.'

I have good reason to think that Lord Trenchard is not alone in this opinion. Certain governments in distant parts of Europe have, to my knowledge, been weighing the prospects very carefully in the light of all the information they can get from many quarters. One, at least, of these governments has reached the conclusion that Britain and her Allies are going to win this war. It is an interesting conclusion, because it is not a result of British influence or propaganda; and when Hitler's attack upon Great Britain has failed, as it will fail, a good many other governments may begin to draw the same conclusion. This does not mean that the fight will be short or easy. It does not mean that we shall not welcome help from any and every quarter. The more help we get, the nearer will victory be, and the less will Europe be impoverished and devastated. As I said last week, we are thinking of the kind of Europe, and the kind of world that will have to be refashioned after the war by a voluntary union of free peoples. Though today we are bearing almost single-handed the burden of this war of liberation, we do not claim exclusive rights in it or look upon it as a British enterprise. It is really the enterprise of every people that cares for freedom and would like to lend a hand in refashioning the world so that it may be fit for freedom. If we have to carry it through almost single-handed, we shall carry it through; but even then we shall not feel tempted to say to other peoples, who

may have given us only moral or material support, what the famous King of France, Henry IV, wrote to his brother-in-arms, Crillon, after the victory of Arques: 'Hang thyself, brave Crillon! We conquered at Arques, and thou wast not there!'

Before many weeks are over we may see more clearly how the fight will develop. If we go on beating off Hitler's attacks upon these islands, he may put up a smoke-screen and try, together with Mussolini, to do better elsewhere. The revolt in Albania against the Italians, and the violent Italian press campaign against Greece, coupled with the mysterious torpedoing of a Greek cruiser at anchor in the Aegean, may foreshadow further complications in and around the Mediterranean. So far, the great Italian offensive against Egypt has not yet begun; and though Mussolini's troops in Somaliland have made progress, they are not having things all their own way. In the air, at any rate, the Italians in Libya and Abyssinia have been faring no better than the German airmen against our fighters, nor has the Italian fleet been able to cut our communications through the Mediterranean.

How the fighting will go in these regions during the next few weeks and months only a soothsayer could foretell. The collapse of French resistance has certainly increased our difficulties. There is, indeed, only one prediction that can be made with complete confidence. It is that unless Hitler wins the battle of Britain he will be doomed, and Mussolini with him. Frankly, I believe that his prospects of winning it are very poor. He may hit us hard but he will not succeed in crippling us or, even less, in dismaying us. We fight with clean hands and stout hearts for a cause that transcends even our national interest. We have been, we still are, the main bastion of the world's freedom. But we are more than its bastion: we are its hope. We do not need to appeal for the sympathy of free peoples, or even for the prayers of peoples enslaved. We have them. In large measure we are getting their support, moral and material. The time will come when the gates of our bastion will be flung open so that our armies, and those that have come to our shores from many parts of the world, may sally forth to extend and to push home the offensive which our bombing aircraft are already taking. With those who will have fought valiantly by our side we shall then set about the creation of a new order in Europe which will make

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an end, once for all, of the evil claim that might is right, and will teach even the deluded Germans that butter is better than guns. That day is not yet. It will surely come. When it dawns, we in Britain, and the free peoples of the British Commonwealth, shall be humbly thankful that to us and to them it was given greatly to serve our fellow men.

THE FIGHT DIES DOWN

In the following days—from August 18 to 23—none of the German air-raids equalled in strength that of August 15, the strongest attack being made on August 18 by 600 German bombers and fighters, of which 153 were destroyed for the loss of 22 British machines, with 10 pilots rescued. Therefore in my talk on August 23 I reported:

So far, at any rate, the fighting this week has been on a smaller scale than it was last week. There has been a kind of lull in the Battle of Britain since last Sunday when 153 German aircraft were brought down, but we are warned that the lull may cease at any moment. On Thursday a number of big German guns on the French side of the English Channel did try to bombard a convoy and to do some damage on our southern coast. The convoy was not hit nor was other damage great, and the German batteries soon got a visit from our bombers. German losses in minor air raids have been, roughly, four or five to one of ours, but there have been fewer enemy aircraft for our airmen to bring down.

Like a good many other people I have been trying to reckon up the odds for and against the renewal of a big attack upon us. On balance, I think that Hitler must go on and try to knock us out during the next few weeks. I feel quite sure that our airmen have hit him much harder than he ever expected to be hit, and that his or Goering's plans have, to that extent, been upset. But as Mr. Winston Churchill and Sir Archibald Sinclair have told us, Hitler has not yet thrown more than a fraction of his aircraft strength into the fight. For reasons I shall give, I think he is bound to make another effort, and perhaps several other efforts, to crush us before the days grow too short and the nights too long for the kind of operation that he evidently had in mind.

The reasons are these. Hitler has told his own people and the world that he means to destroy Great Britain and the British Empire. His first attempts have failed. Dr. Goebbels, his Propaganda Minister, has been turning the figures of German and British losses topsy-turvy, for the benefit of foreign countries, though he has been telling the German people another kind of story. For what was intended to be German home consumption much more modest, though by no means truthful, accounts of the 'Battle of Britain' have been given. Now these accounts have been overheard outside Germany. So the question arises why Hitler is telling one story to his own people and another to the rest of the world.

The answer is that the German people are still capable of a certain amount of reasoning. Their chief ports, munition factories, aircraft works and oil dumps are being disastrously bombed night after night by British bombers—and the Germans know it. So it is no good to tell them that the British Air Force has been pulverized. They have to be told that Britain is going to be smashed but that the smashing cannot be done all at once. And some of the German pilots who have escaped our Spitfires and Hurricanes have been mobilized to let the German people know that the Spitfires and Hurricanes fight very well indeed.

If this were all, the difference between the story that is being told to the Germans and the story given to the outside world might suggest that Hitler is going to switch off from Great Britain and make a big effort elsewhere—perhaps in the Near or Middle East so as to begin the smashing of the British Empire in another quarter. He and Mussolini may try something of the sort, but I don't think it would solve Hitler's main problem. If he were to switch off from the 'Battle of Britain,' everybody, including his own people, would conclude that he has got more than he bargained for and doesn't like it. His propaganda machine might gloss over this conclusion, as far as his own people are concerned, but it could not do away with what I believe to be Hitler's principal worry. This worry is the growing strength of the British Air Force, and the feeling that unless it can be crippled or destroyed very soon, not a single military or industrial centre in Germany can be sure of escaping destruction. We are already turning out, in this country, at least as many machines as Germany is turning out—and machines from

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overseas are coming along. Our total air strength, on paper, may still be far below the total air strength of Germany—also on paper. Yet even now Germany is being hit and hit again with a persistency that Hitler cannot hide from his people. And, as the Prime Minister told the House of Commons on Tuesday: 'Even if the Nazi legions stood triumphant on the Black Sea or, indeed, upon the Caspian, even if Hitler was at the gates of India, it would profit him nothing if at the same time the entire economic and scientific apparatus of German war power lay shattered and pulverized at home.'

So Hitler's chief worry is that he cannot switch off from the Battle of Britain, or wait while he tries to gain victory elsewhere, because while he is waiting the British Air Force will be getting stronger, and Germany will be hit harder and harder. And he cannot evacuate the whole of Germany. He has sent thousands of Germans to take refuge in Paris from Hamburg, Bremen and other cities, and he is sending other thousands into Poland. All this does not prevent his own people from asking, silently but seriously, how Hitler can hope to make good his 'new order' in a Europe under German domination if the German dominators are obliged either to clear out of Germany or to see their own military and industrial centres bombed to pieces before their eyes.

On the whole I am inclined to attribute the present lull to the doubt which must be creeping into Hitler's mind about the best thing to do in the circumstances. Nobody can tell how his curious mind will work; but I should guess that he will feel bound to do everything he can to get rid of the British nuisance, not to say the British danger, as soon as ever he can. So he is probably re-marshalling his forces for new blows at us, though he must be well aware that if these blows fail his chief worry will become a very big worry indeed.

One day this week I had independent testimony of the skill of our fighters. A Polish lady whose home was bombed and machine-gunned by German aircraft last September, and who escaped with a number of girls and children to Roumania in a train that was also pitilessly bombed, happened to see a German attack near the south of London last Sunday. At a great height a hundred enemy aircraft suddenly appeared. A few minutes later, thirty or forty British fighters came up, dodged in and out among the German aircraft, attacked them

like wild cats, broke up their formation and made many of them wobble. The Germans looked unwieldy and clumsy by comparison. Several of them came down in flames, others turned tail. One German bomber broke away and flew low. At that moment a British fighter seemed to drop vertically. She held her breath because it looked like crashing. But it flattened out under the German bomber, blazed at it and sent the German down in a cloud of black smoke. She said: 'I had always thought the British were rather slow. Now I know they can be very quick.'

Among the good things said of our airmen one of the best is Mr. Winston Churchill's phrase: 'Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.' The German official news agency tells us that the speech, in which the Prime Minister said this on Tuesday, was 'a mixture of paralysing fear and desperate swagger.' Somehow or other I think the German agency is wrong. If Mr. Winston Churchill were paralysed by fear he would hardly have found time to draw up and send round to all his colleagues, and to the heads of Departments of State, a message on the need for being brief and for avoiding what it called 'officialese jargon.' By writing short, crisp English, the message said, 'the saving in time will be great, while the discipline of setting out the real points concisely will prove an aid to clearer thinking.' A Prime Minister whose mind was paralysed by fear would not bother about improving the English of his own colleagues and of Civil Servants.

This may not seem a 'world affair' though, as it deals with the proper use of the English language, it may have a world-wide effect. And I think I can guess why the Prime Minister has revolted against the long-winded circumlocution which officials delight in and mistake for good English. In his book, *My Early Life*, he says he was thought to be such a dunce that he remained for three years at the bottom of his school. Clever boys, he writes, were taught 'Latin and Greek and splendid things like that. But I was taught English. We were considered such dunces that we could learn only English—and I learned it thoroughly. Thus I got into my bones the essential structure of the ordinary English sentence—which is a noble thing. . . . Naturally I am biased in favour of boys learning English. I would make them all learn English; and then I would let the clever ones learn Latin as an honour,

and Greek as a treat. But the only thing I would whip them for is for not knowing English. I would whip them hard for that.'

So now this man, paralysed by fear and swaggering desperately to keep his courage up, has been whipping his colleagues and officials for not knowing English. One newspaper calls him 'Jack the Jargon-Killer' and writes: 'Teacher will meet his class at No. 10 Downing Street.' If his class can learn to write and to say things as well as the Prime Minister spoke of the greatest event in the past week—the setting up of a Permanent Joint Board of Defence between the United States and Canada—he will have done a great job of work. It is sometimes forgotten that he himself is Anglo-American. But I do not remember any Briton, or any American, putting things better than he put them when he described last Tuesday the steps that were being taken to give defence facilities to the United States so as to serve the interests of Canada and Newfoundland no less than British and American interests. He said:

'Undoubtedly this process means that these two great organizations of the English-speaking democracies, the British Empire and the United States, will have to be somewhat mixed up together in some of their affairs for mutual and general advantage. For my part, looking out upon the future, I do not view the process with any misgivings. I could not stop it if I wished. No one could stop it. Like the Mississippi, it just keeps rolling along. Let it roll. Let it roll on full flood, inexorable, irresistible, benignant, to broader lands and better days.'

Hitler will have noted this process. Whether he understands all it may mean is another matter. Even if he remembers what Bismarck called the 'hereditary and permanent fact that North America speaks English,' and the importance Bismarck attached to this fact, Hitler may have hoped that a little judicious prompting from Dr. Goebbels would prevent Britons and North Americans from seeing eye to eye. Did not the late Lord Balfour once dwell humorously upon the obstacle to Anglo-American understanding that consists in their 'approximately common language'? Hitler and Goebbels may have chuckled a few years ago when they heard that a book entitled *England Expects Every American To Do His Duty* was a best-seller in the United States.

WORDS ON THE AIR

Today, I fancy, they are beginning to realize that North American feelings have been deeply stirred by the spectacle of a Britain, and a British Commonwealth, in which every man—and, for that matter, every woman—is doing his and her duty in support of a cause that is no less vital to the North American than it is to the British Democracy. At all events Hitler ought to know by this time that the material and moral aid of the United States to this cause will 'just keep rolling along,' and that this aid must render so poor his slender chances of winning the Battle of Britain that very few people or countries will like to gamble heavily upon his success.

So, while we wait for a renewal of Hitler's attack, and watch how he is trying to tidy things up in South-Eastern Europe to his and—perhaps—Mussolini's satisfaction, we feel no fear of the near future, and do feel warranted confidence in what lies beyond it. We may or may not have come to the end of the 'cataract of disaster' of which Mr. Churchill spoke; but we know that every cataract runs, sooner or later, towards a broader and less troubled stream. Of that stream we are already in sight. By reaching and following its course we are sure that we shall enter not only the haven of victory but the broad ocean of concerted effort to ensure a happier lot to a mankind redeemed from the curse of gangster-made war.

TOWARDS A CLIMAX

Things warmed up again during the week from August 23 to August 30, though no German attack was of maximum strength. The ratio of enemy to British losses remained roughly four to one. The first considerable air-raid on London came during the night of August 26 when the warning given by the wailing sirens lasted six hours. These attacks sufficed to give the impression that there might still be a good deal to come—an impression reflected in my talk on August 30 which began:

This week the second round in the Battle of Britain has been going on and, as far as we can tell, is not yet finished. Our airmen and gunners won the first round handsomely. As far as London was concerned, it seemed a comparatively distant

affair, and we were in the position of spectators. In the second round we are in the fight, more as targets than as spectators. And I have noticed this week among our people the same kind of feeling that prevailed at the front in the last war. The troops in one sector of the line were, indeed, in the battle but they could not see it as a whole. Now that we, in London, are in the Battle of Britain, we find it harder to see it as a whole than when we were, or fancied ourselves to be, at some distance from it. And we are getting so used to our part of it that we do not always realize how important the whole battle is.

We have had air-raid warnings and air-raids by day and by night. In the last seventy-two hours they have come chiefly at night, and some of them have lasted six or seven hours. We hear the fire of anti-aircraft batteries, and the noise of a bomb or two bursting here or there. Our newspapers publish photographs of the damage done, and lists of casualties are posted up outside Town Halls. But if Hitler and Goebbels imagine that we are getting 'rattled' they are the victims of their own imaginations. We are sure we can take all, and more than all, they can give us and come up smiling for the next round in the fight.

Dr. Goebbels, I see, has been telling the world that London is in ruins and that we are all moaning and trembling in our air-raid shelters. Even if he knew how many of us sleep quietly in our beds it would not deter him from saying the contrary. The house I live in commands a fairly wide view of London—five or six miles at least. I have yet to see any change in the familiar outlook. In a main thoroughfare not far from my door, the buses, taxis and private cars are still running, the pavements show the usual stream of folk on foot, and there is no perceptible change in our ordinary life. People tell each other that 'they'—meaning the German raiders—have hit this place or that, with no greater emotion than men at the front would feel or show if they heard that things had been lively in a neighbouring sector of the line. We are all in the line. Though we may not all be as keen as the old lady of ninety who said that as she would not live to see another war she had made up her mind to see as much as she could of this one, we do take the air-raid warnings and the air raids as being all in the day's work.

We don't quite understand what Hitler may be after with

his new tactics of night raids by single or small groups of bombers. The sum total of the damage they do is really small. If the new tactics are meant to be part of the 'war of nerves' they are not likely to be much more successful than were the mass attacks a week or two ago. One report that has been published on good authority makes us wonder whether everything is quite so pretty in the German garden as Goebbels would have the world believe. In the earlier mass attacks a good many German pilots dropped their bombs into the sea, or indiscriminately on open country, before turning tail and trying to get out of the way of our fighters and anti-aircraft guns. Latterly, it seems, Himmler, the head of the Gestapo or Secret State Police, has put one of his own men among every group of German bombers to make sure that the bombs shall not be jettisoned aimlessly. I do not attach undue importance to this story, though it may well be true, because I know that it is a regular German practice to place machine-guns behind German troops in the field, and that despite this curious encouragement German infantry can and do go forward and fight hard. If our methods are not German methods, it does not follow that German methods do not suit the Germans.

To my mind the real question is whether Hitler's tactics in this second round of the Battle of Britain are only a make-shift for the mass attacks that failed, or whether they are meant to test our mettle before bigger attacks are made. Mussolini has been explaining that the comparative mildness of Hitler's performances so far is meant to give us a 'last chance' to treat for peace before we are utterly crushed. On this theory the dropping of copies of Hitler's speech with its last 'appeal to reason' would also have been part of a 'peace offensive.' But there is at least equal reason to take Mussolini's and Hitler's talk as bluff. The truth is that Hitler has tried to hit us very hard indeed, and found that we hit him much harder. Last week I explained why I thought Hitler was bound to go on trying to smash us. He has gone on and, I think, must and will go on. There would be no room for surprise—or for dismay—should he intensify his efforts during the next few weeks. He must have something to show his own people before the autumn gales and the advent of winter check his larger operations against this country; and if he has nothing more to show than he can show—and we

admit—up to the present, he will be obliged to lie to his own people on a scale that even they may not find convincing as long as British bombers keep up the systematic destruction of Hitler's war apparatus in Germany.

One point is worth remembering upon what I may call the strategy and the tactics of lying. It may be tactically shrewd for Goebbels to tell the world in advance of the mighty deeds of German airmen, and to let the British reports of what actually took place appear tardy and halting by comparison. Before the British reports can be compiled and verified from a number of sources and witnesses, Goebbels may have sent out another account in advance of new—and equally imaginary—German triumphs. The value of these tactics depends upon the success of a wider strategy. If nothing happens to bear out tactical falsehoods, those who believed the falsehoods will end by discovering that they have been comprehensively and constantly misled. When the German people discover this—as they will one day—Hitler may suffer a defeat in the field of psychological strategy that will undermine German resistance.

This kind of discovery has been going on both in France and in French African Colonies during the past week. Between the lines, and even explicitly, French newspapers published under the control of the Vichy Government have been writing in a way that would have involved them in a prosecution and punishment only a few weeks ago. And now there has come a remarkable, and encouraging, movement of revolt against the Vichy Government in the important French Colonies of Chad in Northern Central Africa, and in the Cameroons and the French Congo in West Equatorial Africa. The movement began publicly last Monday when the Civil and Military Governors of the Chad territory declared in the name of the whole population and of the troops of the colony, that the 'greatness and independence of France demand that France overseas shall continue to fight by the side of Great Britain.' The declaration added that therefore the territory and the troops of Chad must be united with the free French forces under General de Gaulle and, economically, with the neighbouring British territories in Africa.

In response to this decision Mr. Winston Churchill assured General de Gaulle that Great Britain will help Chad, and other French territories that might follow its example, in the

same way as help would be given to British colonies in similar circumstances. General de Gaulle lost no time in broadcasting the good news to the French Colonial Empire. He said:

'Notwithstanding a particularly dangerous military and economic situation, the Chad territory has refused shameful capitulation and has decided to continue the war until victory. Its admirable resolve shows the path of duty, and gives to the whole French Empire a signal to raise its head.'

On the morrow the Cameroons followed the example of Chad in what is described as an irresistible movement of the whole population. Before the last war the Cameroons were a German colony. After the war they were assigned to France under a mandate from the League of Nations. So marked was the difference between German and French methods of colonial administration that the natives became strongly attached to France; and only last year a monument was erected in honour of a native leader whom the Germans had murdered. So it is hardly surprising that the surrender of France to Germany should have filled the Cameroons with dismay, and that they should immediately have followed the example of the Chad territory in standing by General de Gaulle and the free French forces.

Within twenty-four hours the neighbouring colony of French Equatorial Africa, sometimes called the French Congo, joined the movement. The representatives of General de Gaulle took over civil and military power amid the acclamations of the people and of the troops. Since the French Congo borders on the vast Belgian Congo, which has remained loyal to the Allied cause, this movement of revolt against the Vichy Government means that the whole of Central Africa is now with the Allies; for the Belgian Congo borders on the British territories of Northern Rhodesia, Tanganyika and Kenya while French Equatorial Africa and Chad border on the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

The meaning of these events will not be lost upon Mussolini. He seems not quite to know whether it would be expedient to push to the point of open war his campaign of intimidation against Greece. Nor is it clear how far he and Hitler, or, rather, Hitler and he, will succeed in bending Roumania to their will. The Roumanian and Hungarian representatives who have been summoned to Vienna this week to hear and heed the dictates of Ribbentrop, on behalf of Hitler,

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and in the presence of Count Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law, have not yet come to an agreement about Transylvania; and until some agreement is patched up or imposed upon them, the campaign of the Axis Powers in and around the Mediterranean may hang fire.

But the first necessity for Hitler is to get the Battle of Britain out of the way. This is why I feel sure that he will go on hitting at us until he finds that the task of destroying us is beyond his power. As Mr. Churchill said last Tuesday week, we are still toiling up the hill towards victory, we cannot survey the landscape or even imagine what it will be like when the day of victory dawns. But I think we are out of the morass at the bottom of the hill. Though it was never, in our minds, a Slough of Despond, we are shaking the mud and the slime off our feet, and are moving steadily upwards.

FIRST ANNIVERSARY

Amid air-raid warnings and the noise of exploding bombs we kept—without exactly celebrating—on September 3 the first anniversary of our war against Germany. In my talk on September 6 I said:

During the past week I have read or heard many accounts of the first year of the war. Somehow or other they sounded like ancient history. Things that are happening from day to day, and things that may happen before long, strike me, and a good many others, as far more interesting than the things that have happened. But I know of one true story about the past that is worth telling because it bears on the future.

Last spring our Government decided to round up and intern aliens of enemy nationality, with little regard for their political sympathies or antecedents. Behind this sweeping measure, which, in a large number of cases, has now been admitted to have been harsh and unjust, lay the desire to stop the leakage of information to the enemy which had undoubtedly been going on. This object is said to have been attained, and a lot of perfectly innocent people have now been set free.

Among the innocent men was a former Austrian officer, a determined opponent of Hitler. In an internment camp to which he had been sent something like panic broke out when

news came that the Germans had entered Paris on June 14; and, on June 17, that the French Government at Bordeaux had capitulated. Smarting though he was under a sense of injustice, this Austrian stopped the panic by haranguing more than a thousand of his fellow-internees. On the strength of his military experience he told them that Hitler had lost the war, and had lost it twice over. If Hitler, he said, had thrown the whole weight of the German air force against England on September 4 last year, and had left Poland alone for the time being, he would have stood a good chance of success. He missed that chance.

Hitler had another chance—the Austrian officer went on—immediately after the evacuation of Dunkirk at the beginning of June. Though the greater part of the British regular army had been saved, its units were disorganized and it had lost its equipment. Then was the moment for Hitler to strike with all his forces at England. He and Mussolini could have dealt with France at their leisure if England had been smashed. Again, Hitler missed the moment. So, concluded the Austrian officer, Hitler has lost the war twice over, the British will win it, and though we internees are now in concentration camps, the British victory will set us and our countries free.

I am told that the British officer in command of that internment camp sent for the Austrian officer and thanked him for what he had done. Expert inquiry soon proved the Austrian officer's innocence, and he was released.

I thought of this story after I had read Hitler's latest speech a couple of days ago. Unluckily, I didn't hear the speech this time, and could not therefore judge from the voice of 'that bad man'—as Mr. Winston Churchill calls him—what his state of mind might be. But it read as though Hitler were very angry and very uncomfortable. If his threats do not leave us altogether cold—because we know that he can do us a good deal of harm—they have as little effect upon our nerves as his air-raids have had upon our defences and our power to hit him harder than he can hit us.

There is a reason for the steadiness of our nerves which is sometimes forgotten. Ever since the crisis of September 1938, which ended in the Munich 'Agreement' for the carving up of Czechoslovakia, we have been led to expect that in the event of war we should suffer very severely indeed. We have made preparations for shelter and for defence. But we have

never thought or been told that they would save us from a great deal of suffering and loss. One hundred and fifty thousand beds were kept ready for casualties in our hospitals. The Germans, on the contrary, have been told again and again that they would be safe from attack by air and would have nothing to fear, thanks to the excellence of German defences and to the overwhelming might of Goering's air force. One consequence has been that while we are agreeably surprised by the efficiency of our defences and the outstanding skill of our airmen—their gallantry has not surprised us—the Germans have been very disagreeably surprised by the pounding they have got and by the failure of their attacks upon us. All the reports that come from neutral observers in Germany tend to show that psychologically as well as materially our airmen have hit the Germans very much harder than the Germans ever thought possible.

I find in Hitler's speech some evidence of confusion or, at any rate, of faulty co-ordination of ideas in the higher councils of Nazism. It was not merely preposterous when Hitler said that he had waited three months 'for the British to cease the nuisance of nightly and planless bomb-dropping,' and that henceforth he would have to wipe out British towns. Didn't he know or had he forgotten that Dr. Goebbels assured the German people only a week ago that London was already in ruins? The Germans may be very gullible; but, so far as my knowledge of them goes, their memories are quite good and their power of reasoning sufficient to enable them to draw their own conclusions.

We are now at the end of the first month of the Battle of Britain. Both the Prime Minister and Mr. Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for War, have warned us that the battle is by no means over, and that we may still have to withstand harder blows than any Hitler has yet struck. As I have said more than once, he must break us, or be broken. We were never so sure as we are today that we shall not be broken. And, I believe, the shrieking incoherence of Hitler's latest rodomontade was due to an unpleasant feeling which is creeping into his mind that we may not be wrong.

This unpleasant feeling has not been lessened by the Anglo-American arrangement for the transfer of fifty United States destroyers to the British Navy in return for the grant of naval and air bases to the United States in Newfoundland,

Bermuda and the West Indies. It is not only the military and naval side of this arrangement that will have troubled Hitler. Its political and psychological sides will have troubled him even more. He and Dr. Goebbels have paid constant attention to American opinion since 1933, and have sought to manipulate it in ways that did not appear to be propaganda. Latterly Dr. Goebbels has done his best to spread in the United States and, indeed, throughout the world, the belief that Great Britain was doomed and must share the fate of France. But now Hitler and Goebbels may well suspect that the United States would not have entered into the Anglo-American arrangement, nor would it have transferred the fifty destroyers, unless American opinion had come to the conclusion that the British Commonwealth and its Allies are not going to be beaten. Hitler may deplore so perverse a conclusion, but it does not comfort him.

Nor will Hitler be altogether blind to the possible effects of the Anglo-American arrangement upon the Pacific. He may or may not have known, before he spoke in Berlin, that Mr. Cordell Hull had given Japan a broad hint that the United States 'attaches importance' to the alleged Japanese ultimatum to French Indo-China. I do not know exactly what the relations between Germany and Japan may be. But quite apart from any influence which Mr. Cordell Hull's hint may have upon Japanese policy towards Indo-China, I think it should strengthen the tendency of the French Administration there to sympathize with those other parts of the French Colonial Empire that have resolved to carry on the struggle against Nazi Germany. That tendency is growing more and more marked—as the frequent arrival at Gibraltar of French aeroplanes from Morocco goes to show.

HITLER HITS LONDON

In the second week of September the Battle of Britain flared up again with heavy and persistent bombing of London and some deliberate attacks on Buckingham Palace. Civilian casualties were severe and damage to buildings was considerable. On September 13 I commented on these developments:

Hitler is taking us at our word. We have said that we can stand all he can do to us, and shall give him more than he

will be able to stand. By this time he ought to be finding out that we are as good as our word. His aircraft have done quite a lot of damage to London and have kept a good many people from sleeping in their beds. There have also been a fairly large number of casualties, though nothing like the losses that would have been suffered in even one day's fighting between land armies. Nor are the losses much heavier than the toll taken of civilian lives by street accidents in the first weeks of the black-out a year ago. The difference between civilian casualties and military casualties may be that soldiers are trained to withstand and to inflict losses whereas civilians have to withstand the losses without hitting back. This may be why our civilians like to feel that our airmen are giving Hitler in Germany a full dose of his own medicine—and then some. The latest German reports admit that our bombers have made Berlin and other places understand that night bombardment by air is a two-sided game. Indeed, there is a note of fright as well as of anger in the German reports. Our people, too, are getting quite angry, though there is no trace of fright among them. If, as one German report explains, Hitler's object is to frighten the inhabitants of London into fleeing, helter skelter, from the capital, so as to block the roads, this object will not be attained. Our people are 'staying put.'

Nor has the bombing of London attained another object which Hitler may well have had in mind. It has not turned our attention from the bigger issues of the war. It has not even made us feel that we are in the centre of the picture, or that our personal safety, or the safety of London, is more than a minor episode in the great struggle. If I may judge by my own immediate surroundings, our people are actually getting used to being bombed. They make their beds in relatively safe places, sleep as well as the noise of gunfire and the sound of bombs will let them—well enough for many of them not to hear the 'all clear' signal when a night raid is over. The house where I live has been shaken by the reverberation of bombs two or three times, and my domestic staff have made me a cosy shake-down under the stairs. I haven't used it yet but I suppose I shall if my bedroom windows are blown in or if the house is damaged slightly enough to allow me to take any further interest in my safety. There are millions like me. We carry on, and mean to carry on.

Last Wednesday night was very noisy. Our fighters and anti-aircraft gunners had shot down more than four score of Hitler's aircraft during the day, and we were expecting the usual visitation at night. Instead there was such an anti-aircraft barrage from our own guns that the sky seemed alive with shrapnel for nearly nine hours. Next morning a good many streets were littered with shell splinters—to the delight of souvenir hunters. One errand boy came to my house in great glee because he had found a big splinter. You can't beat people like these; and, that night, Hitler's bombers appear to have thought discretion the better part of valour. Most of them turned back after two of them had paid the penalty of trying to get through the barrage.

The Prime Minister is certainly right when he tells us that the bombardment of London is only a part of Hitler's plan for the invasion of England, and that Hitler hopes, by killing large numbers of civilians, to terrorize and cow Londoners, make them a burden and an anxiety for the Government, and thus distract our attention unduly from the ferocious onslaught he is preparing upon our shores. If the onslaught can be launched at all it will probably be before the end of this month.¹ I should not like to be among the men who undertake it. They may not even get a good start. Large enemy forces, with stores and munitions, have been gathering for weeks past at many points under Hitler's control from Norway to Western France. Again and again these preparations to invade us have been broken up by our bombers and our Navy. If weather conditions—which are not certain to favour such operations in early autumn—should enable Hitler to land troops in this country, I think, from what I know of our defensive arrangements, that they would all be killed or made prisoner in a very short time. The odds against success are so formidable that Hitler must be very hard pressed indeed if he makes up his mind to face them.

We cannot, of course, know what is passing in his mind. Just as we in London have to remember that the bombs which Hitler drops upon us are only a minor aspect of his strategy, and that he has to take the whole war situation into account, so Hitler has to remember that the edifice of victory

¹ The German preparations for the onslaught were smashed on September 16.

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which he has been trying to build rests upon the twin cornerstones of fear and prestige. He must go on trying to hold in passive subjection, by fear, the peoples whom he has conquered. This is, no doubt, why he took his revenge for the exploits of Polish airmen in the British Air Force, who shot down a number of his fighters the other day, by ordering the execution in a German concentration camp of Dr. Starzynski, the gallant Mayor of Warsaw who held out against Hitler's forces for three weeks. Hitler had him shot on the anniversary of the invasion of Poland, not only because Hitler is by nature a cad and a brute but because he thinks that the execution of Starzynski will fill the people of Poland with fear. But in order to impress the outside world Hitler needs to keep up his prestige, his reputation for invincibility. He has said that Britain will break under his blows. If he cannot break Britain, his prestige will begin to wane, and everybody will know it. So, for the sake of prestige, he may be driven to make an attempt that brought disaster on Spain in 1588, and on Napoleon in the early years of the nineteenth century.

If he makes the attempt, and fails, things will look worse for him than they might look if he doesn't make it. On the whole I think he is bound to make it for a reason which is not usually taken into account. Within a very few months the industrial effort of the United States to supply aircraft and other war material to Great Britain and her Allies will weigh very heavily in the balance. Simultaneously the Empire Air Training Scheme in Canada will strengthen the British Air Force to such an extent as to make it irresistible. Whether Hitler has taken into his calculation the fact that this year is a 'Presidential year' in the United States, and the possibility that after the election in November American policy may no longer be influenced by electoral considerations, I neither know nor care to guess. But he cannot be blind to the meaning of the Permanent Joint Defence Board set up by Canada and the United States, or to the implications of the British and American exchange of air and naval bases for United States destroyers. All these things must make Hitler wish to reach a decision by knocking Britain out while she stands, practically alone, in his path. Time is not on his side. So, on balance, and notwithstanding the risk of failure, I should be surprised if he did not try to take time by the forelock.

One gets a clearer notion of the immensity of Hitler's

gamble if one looks at Northern and Western Africa. The long-threatened Italian invasion of Egypt from Libya is, according to Italian reports, about to begin. No doubt Hitler is putting pressure upon Italy to begin it. Mussolini would be ready enough to start the operation, despite its difficulty, if he felt quite sure that Hitler can smash Great Britain at home. But one of Mussolini's own mouthpieces has publicly admitted that the smashing of Britain will be a hard and a lengthy business; and there seems to be so much anxiety in Rome about the outcome of the war that Mussolini has had to order the arrest of a large number of disaffected Italians, including two of the most prominent Roman noblemen. Yet there is one trump card which Mussolini and Hitler are desperately trying to play. They have been frightened by the movement of French Equatorial Africa in favour of continuing the war under the leadership of General de Gaulle, and they fear that unless this movement can be checked it may spread to other parts of Western and Northern Africa. So Marshal Pétain has sent General Weygand to Northern Africa in the hope of checking the movement. Marshal Pétain himself has been induced to use the German short-wave broadcasting station in Paris to make an appeal to Frenchmen everywhere to recognize that France has lost the war and that her first duty is obedience to the Government of Vichy. One can hardly imagine that even Marshal Pétain would have done this of his own free will. He himself has said that he has the German halter round his neck. The very fact that he has consented to do it goes to prove that German pressure upon him must be extreme. One cannot understand why Marshal Pétain should yield to it—but then one cannot understand why he should ever have concluded what General de Gaulle always calls 'the abominable armistice.'

One can understand, on the contrary, the reasons for the German pressure. If the whole of French Western Africa should rally to General de Gaulle, Germany would lose her prospective jumping-off place for eventual operations against South America. Then the movement might spread to Morocco and to Tunis, even if it did not immediately affect Algeria which has always been governed from metropolitan France. Italy has been proclaiming loudly that Tunis is already hers. Should any French resistance develop there, the campaign from Libya against Egypt would be much more

risky than it already is. So Italy and Germany together are probably straining every nerve to compel the subservient Vichy Government to do their bidding and to keep Northern and Western Africa in storage for them. Here, again, much may depend upon the result of Hitler's attacks on Great Britain during the next few days or weeks.

From North Africa it is not far to Syria where the hold of the Vichy Government upon the local French authorities and upon the native population seems precarious. General de Larminat, who was Chief of Staff in Syria until he joined General de Gaulle and was appointed Commander of the free French forces in the Cameroons, the French Congo and the Chad territory, has broadcast a moving appeal to his former comrades in Syria to join him and General de Gaulle in continuing the war. In the hope of checking any response to this appeal, the French authorities in Syria have closed the country to the Egyptian newspapers which are arguing that the freedom of Egypt and of the Arab world is bound up with that of Britain and free France. A German setback in the Battle of Britain, or an Italian reverse in the Mediterranean or Libya, might turn the scale in Syria and, perhaps, throughout North Africa.

Then, there is Indo-China where the French authorities appear not to be accepting all the demands of Japan. Whether or not Hitler takes the Far East into his immediate reckoning, he will hardly wish, by pressing the Vichy Government to let Japan have her own way, to run the risk of giving greater point to Mr. Cordell Hull's repeated warnings to Japan about Indo-China. The last thing Hitler wants is to provoke the United States before he has dealt with Great Britain. His plan has always been: one victim at a time. He is angry with Great Britain for being so unwilling a victim. He would like to bolster up his prestige, and to wreak his wrath upon us, by showing Europe and the world that none can withstand him.

We, for our part, are quietly confident that we can withstand him. His bombings of London have not lessened our confidence in the slightest degree. We take them as the measure of his fury and of his urgent need for success. We feel sure he has not yet taken our measure or understood that his wrath is a mean thing alongside of the righteous and devouring flame which his wickedness and cruelty have kindled in every British heart.

WORDS ON THE AIR

THE SPIRIT OF BRITAIN

The bombing of London continued from September 15 to 18, Buckingham Palace being hit for the third time on the morning of the 15th. On the 17th the West End, Central London, and the East, South-East and South-West districts were heavily damaged. I was absent from London on a speaking tour in central England and South Wales during the worst of these raids, though I came in for several attacks on Cardiff and Swansea. In my talk on September 19 I said:

This talk is about Britain. During the past week I have been in several parts of central England and in South Wales. By road and rail I have covered a good many hundred miles and have addressed some large public meetings. It may be news to many beyond our shores that public meetings are still being held in British towns and cities, even where air-raids are most frequent. Some of the towns I have visited have had more than 200 air-raids in the last five or six weeks, and have suffered what, in other circumstances, might be called severe damage. In this war, and in view of the number of raids, the damage done cannot be called severe. It has not checked industrial output or prevented either the production of munitions or the export trade from going on more briskly than they went on a year ago. What loss of life there has been has occurred principally in private houses.

Let me first describe my journey from the centre of England back to London, and from London again to South Wales. On the road from central England traffic was heavy. But so little hindrance or stoppage was there that my car averaged well over thirty miles an hour. On the way I saw no damage of any kind, only cheerful people going about their business and making a point of lending each other a hand if they could. In London that afternoon and during the following night there were seven air-raid warnings. The anti-aircraft guns were firing almost continuously. Yet when I went next day to take the train for South Wales, while another air-raid warning was 'on,' the streets were by no means empty, and the crowded train started punctually. I kept a look out for damage along the line but saw little or none until I came to South Wales, which has been mentioned again

and again in the *communiqués* of the Air Ministry as having received Hitler's attentions. There indeed one saw that the people—not the industries or the docks—had been, comparatively, harder hit than London. But one saw, too, that the impression made on the spirit of the people was the same as in London—a determination to stand up to the worst Hitler may be able to do, to 'stay put' and to help in winning the war.

Here are one or two typical instances of the way these people are behaving. After a bad air-raid, a fortnight ago, a man in working overalls made his way, unannounced, into the Mayor's office of that city and said: 'I want you to do something for the old woman and the kid.' 'Have you been bombed?' asked the Mayor. 'Yes,' answered the man. 'They've smashed our house but I've got the old woman and the kid out all right, and I want you to look after them. I can look after myself, and I must go to work.' The Mayor arranged at once for the man's wife and child to be looked after. While he was giving instructions somebody said to the man: 'Well, what do you think of the war now?' The man replied: 'If I were as sure that I shall go to Heaven as I am that we shall win this war I should be quite happy.' He was one of those deeply religious men of whom there are many in South Wales.

The local officer in charge of the air-raid services in that city told me of a boy of sixteen who had volunteered to take a message on his bicycle to a distant post during the same air raid. The boy had gone a short distance when the explosion of a bomb in a side street blew him out of the saddle. He picked himself up, remounted his machine, only to be blown off by another bomb a few minutes later. Again he picked himself up and went on, though one of his tyres had been burst. Before he reached the post a third bomb blew him off his machine once more and threw him against a wall where he lost consciousness for a while. When he came round he saw that the other tyre of his bicycle had been burst. Nevertheless he remounted it, delivered the message and then rode back the whole distance with his two tyres cut to ribbons. Not until he was ordered to rest, after his scratches and bruises had been dressed, would he think of going home.

Everybody has heard, I suppose, of the magnificent gallantry of the squad of Royal Engineers, and of their

officer, who dug out the big bomb that would otherwise have wrecked St. Paul's Cathedral, carried it on a lorry to an open space five miles away and exploded it harmlessly there. Such men deserve recognition and reward. But what may not be quite so well known is the pluck of the common people who carry on with the same contempt of death and of danger as the trained soldiers show. I heard a dozen instances of these things in South Wales, and saw with my own eyes the way people are standing up to the German air-raids.

In a place which I shall not mention, beyond saying that it exports more coal than any similar place in Great Britain or, perhaps, in the world, I was due to address a public meeting in a large hall after dusk. I had been told that German air-raids often began at that hour and that people might prefer to go home or to take shelter somewhere rather than come to the meeting. So I was prepared for a small audience of exceptionally plucky folk. The seating capacity of the hall is 1500. Seventeen hundred people turned up, sang hymns while they waited for the meeting to begin, sang the British National Anthem before it began, and the Welsh National Anthem at its close an hour and a half later. As they went out into the night their first question was: 'Has Jerry come yet?' He happened not to have come that evening. He came later, and I heard him. But those people could not know that he would not come and try to bomb the hall while they were there.

If any Englishman or Scotsman is inclined to think that the Welsh are less sturdy or dour than he is, I should advise him to take a trip to South Wales before Hitler has been beaten. The Welsh have their national peculiarities. Love of music is certainly one of them. To hear a Welsh crowd sing is something worth going to Wales for. It is just as impossible to beat those people as it is to beat the English or the Scots—and that is saying a good deal.

So I came back to London with a very hearty respect for the Welsh. Last Wednesday there were eight air-raids on London, and a good many big shops and residential quarters were knocked about. I saw some signs of damage, here and there, as the train ran through the western suburbs. Yet the terminus was crammed with taxi-cabs, the railway porters were quick and obliging, the streets were filled with people, and had one not known what an ordeal they had been through

the night before, one would not have imagined that anything unusual had happened. If quiet pluck, and determination to 'stick it,' can win the Battle of Britain, the battle is as good as won.

I must say that, so far, we have been lucky and Hitler has been unlucky. It is not the fashion nowadays to talk much about the weather; and since the war began no weather reports have been issued. But the Prime Minister said ten days ago that Hitler's attempts to invade us might be made at any moment, and also that at any moment the long spell of fine dry weather, which had lasted since July, might break. The very next morning it began to break. Hitler had been assembling self-propelling barges, supply ships and sea-going craft of all kinds to ferry his army across the Channel and to land them on our shores. The Royal Air Force and the associated air services had been paying particular attention to these craft, and had made a salad of a good many of them. Then a strong south-west gale sprang up and drove the undamaged vessels to seek shelter at points less exposed to wind and weather than those selected for their adventurous attempt. One lady said to me, with dry humour: 'If Hitler's men try to cross the Channel in their barges today they will be very seasick.' The English Channel in a south-westerly gale can be an uncomfortable place for much stouter vessels than self-propelling barges. I am not sure that a big Atlantic liner could get through that choppy, angry sea without making most of its passengers feel qualms of conscience. So Hitler's vessels had to huddle together in unexpected places where they were sought out and attended to by our aircraft. I do not know whether Hitler is a good sailor. But I fancy that the south-west gale will have given him a bit of a headache.

Of course the people of London and of other bombed towns and cities would not have been displeased to hear that the people of Berlin were being repaid with interest for what the German 'hit and run' raiders had done to us. The attempts to smash Buckingham Palace and to kill the King and Queen have disgusted our people even more than the indiscriminate bombings of residential quarters. But the Government and the military authorities are surely wise in avoiding mere reprisals and in hitting the Nazi war machine precisely in those places where they can hurt it most. The

German people will find out sooner or later that Hitler's time-table has been upset and that, for some reason or other, his halo of invincibility has got a little tarnished. Yet it is not the German people who will learn most swiftly of the increasing discomfiture of Hitler's plans. It is the rest of the world that is watching and waiting and wondering and hoping—wondering whether Hitler has not at last met more than his match, and hoping that he has. I think that the wondering will give place to conviction, and the hope to full assurance, as the weeks and months go by.

In these days it is good to be alive in Britain. It is good to feel quite sure of things one has always believed to be true, and to know that our people will not wilt or quail under any kind of devilry. It is good to find, as I have found during the past few days, that one has only to touch certain chords in the hearts of our people to evoke a resounding volume of faith and determination that swells into a majestic symphony in which national and social and human harmonies are sublimely blended. I have not heard one discordant tone in all the intercourse I have had with our people during this time of uplifting trial. And I feel sure that the spirit which animates our people now will only need to be turned, under lofty and enlightened leadership, to the works of peace, when the war is over, in order to make the days before the war seem dreary and dark in comparison with what will be.

Our people are not looking backward. They are not even keeping their minds entirely upon the peril that besets them by day and hovers over them by night. They are looking forward to what shall be and must be if Britain is to take the lead in saving Europe by her example after having saved herself by her sacrifices and effort. I can find no trace of weariness or of wishing that it 'were over.' We want to go through with it, to get it done, so that we may be free to get other and still bigger things done. We have had our bad patches in the past twenty years. More than once we gave the world apparent cause to doubt whether we still were what we had so long seemed to be. Those bad patches of the past belong to the past. We have found ourselves again as individuals and as a people. We have looked, we are looking, death and destruction in the face, and are not afraid.

The other day when the King and Queen went to visit some humble streets that had been bombed, and went within

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

an hour of the bombing of Buckingham Palace, a man shouted: 'You are a great King!' 'You are a great people!' was the King's answer. Both were right. The King and Queen are tip-top; and the country is full of nameless heroes and heroines who have not the faintest notion that they are doing anything more than anybody else would do. Yet in their heart of hearts they wish to know what the war will lead to, and how something better can be got out of it. They are determined not to fall back into pre-war ways and days. Of this I am more convinced than ever after my trip from central England to London, and then to South Wales and back. The country is waiting for the touch which inspired leadership can give it at the right moment; and the real strength of the Prime Minister lies in the widespread belief that at the right moment he will give it.

THE CLIMAX AND AFTER

At the end of September the Battle of Britain reached and passed its climax. On September 27, when I gave my next talk, the enemy lost 133 machines and suffered his second greatest defeat since his *Blitzkrieg* against Britain began. The R.A.F. lost 34 machines, with 16 pilots saved. Smaller attacks continued for some days but none on so large a scale. Hitler had lost the Battle of Britain. So, on September 27, while the bombs were falling and the guns were blazing away at the enemy aircraft, I talked less of the Battle of Britain itself than of the wider outlook. This talk ran:

In his broadcast last Monday the King said: 'It is London that is for the time being bearing the brunt of the enemy's spite.' That night, and every night since, London has again been in the forefront of the battle. If I cannot say truthfully that we are getting used to it, I can say that the spirit and the cheerfulness of Londoners grow more astonishing as the enemy hits them harder. This applies to the older folk as well as to the younger. A man of sixty-two writes to one of our leading newspapers:

'How lucky are we sixties to seventies! We thought we could never get to the war. Our poor old legs would never carry us to a front along the old lines from Ypres, Bethune, the Somme. But now the war has come to us, delivered with

the milk every morning, and indeed usually before the morning paper. And we, Air Raid Precaution men, Home Guards, etc., find ourselves again in the front line.'

London is being knocked about a good deal. Many of our houses, even when they are not hit, rock like steamers in a gale to the blast of heavy bombs, or vibrate when a salvo of anti-aircraft guns in the neighbourhood sends the air rushing through windows and curtains. But the Chairman of the London County Council put our feelings into words the other day when he said that no matter how much London may be knocked about, we shall build a finer and better London after the war. Hitler may do his damndest. He won't get us under.

Meanwhile we are hitting him still harder. If an ordinary citizen of Berlin could broadcast freely as I am broadcasting from London he would have a tale to tell. So would the men on Hitler's barges and other vessels, to say nothing of the heavy-gun crews near Calais, who are seeing night after night their preparations for invasion smashed to smithereens or go up in explosions, flames and smoke. Hammering for hammering, it is we who are hammering hardest; and we shall see who can stand it longest.

So the home front is steady and sound. Supplies of food and of war materials are pouring in to our ports by millions of tons a month. We know well, as the King said, that 'we live in grim times, and it may be that the future will be grimmer yet.' We have had a reminder this week how plans can go awry, and that while we are fighting, and winning, the Battle of Britain, not everything turns out as we hoped it would elsewhere. We should like to know more than we have yet been told about the Franco-British expedition to Dakar. It looks as though somebody, somewhere, had been badly informed or had fallen into a trap. General de Gaulle and his advisers obviously expected to be welcomed by their fellow countrymen when they reached Dakar. They may have thought that the presence of a grandson of Marshal Foch among the little band of men who were sent unarmed into the harbour under a white flag would be enough to convince the Dakar authorities of the pure patriotism of Free Frenchmen. Perhaps they had not yet taken the full measure of persistent shamelessness among the Men of Vichy or of the passionate quality of the grovelling before Hitler to which

Marshal Pétain and his colleagues have shown themselves addicted. In any event it seems to us onlookers that the chance of failure at Dakar should have been discounted in advance and that arrangements should have been made to meet it. As we do not yet know the full facts, we suspend final judgment. We are sorry only that what looked like being a hopeful undertaking has suffered a setback of which the consequences may be felt on both sides of the Southern Atlantic.

Nor are we quite happy about what may be going on in Spain. For that matter a good many of us have not been happy about Spain since General Franco began his rebellion, with the backing of Hitler and Mussolini, in July 1936. We could not understand what the Franco-British policy of non-intervention was really driving at; because it seemed to us unlikely that if Hitler and Mussolini should make General Franco master of Spain they would ever allow him to be altogether master in his own house. So when we hear today that his relative and Minister of the Interior, Señor Suñer, the leader of the Spanish Falangists, has been hobnobbing with Hitler in Berlin, that Hitler is insisting that Spain should join Germany and Italy in the war, and that Madrid and Barcelona are full of Gestapo men who are making themselves very much at home, we wonder whether what many of us thought the errors of British policy in the past may not be coming home to roost.

I know well some of the foolish illusions that have been cherished by Marshal Pétain and the Men of Vichy. It should not be forgotten that Marshal Pétain was the French Ambassador to General Franco before he was recalled to join the Cabinet of M. Paul Reynaud last spring. He seems to have been persuaded that Italy, Spain and France could form a Latin block which would eventually be able to withstand Hitler and the Germany army. This idea may have lain behind Marshal Pétain's readiness to yield to Hitler and Mussolini. Anybody who entertained it must have forgotten that in the Rome-Berlin Axis Italy is the tail which does not wag the dog. Mussolini has been the accomplice and is now the servant of Hitler; and, in words which Marshal Goering once boastfully used, Italy is to be 'Germany's bridgehead to Africa and to the oceans beyond.'

He who sups with the devil needs a long spoon, even if he

be half a devil himself. I wonder whether Mussolini or, for that matter, Marshal Pétain or General Franco has ever read the revealing passage in Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, that foreshadows his procedure towards conquered or subservient nations. It says, textually:

'A shrewd victor will, if possible, keep imposing his demands on the conquered by degrees. He can then, in dealing with a nation that has lost its character—and this means everyone that submits voluntarily—count on its never finding in any particular act of oppression a sufficient excuse for taking up arms once more. On the contrary, the greater the exactions that have been willingly endured, the less justifiable does it seem to resist at last on account of a new and apparently isolated (though, to be sure, constantly recurring) imposition.'

Marshal Pétain's France cannot, in any case, 'take up arms once more.' She is helpless, and Hitler can extort step by step what he wants by tightening the halter round the necks of the Men of Vichy. If Hitler tries to bribe Spain by the promise of Gibraltar and part of French Morocco, or announces that by agreement with Mussolini he will take the rest of Morocco himself, Marshal Pétain and his colleagues cannot resist. If Hitler says that he wants Dakar and Senegal, with their air-fields, and demands that the Men of Vichy should help him to get them by opposing General de Gaulle, Marshal Pétain can only try, in vain, to win Hitler's favour by doing what Hitler wants. So it has been, and is, at Jibuti, in Syria and in Indo-China; and if the final decision depended on the Men of Vichy there would be no serious obstacle to Hitler's success. Assuredly Mussolini would not dare to quarrel with him over the, possibly meagre, Italian share of the crumbs that might fall from the rich man's table.

But here's the rub. The decision does not depend upon the Men of Vichy alone. Great Britain and the British Commonwealth have a word to say. The Arab world is by no means indifferent; and before very long Mussolini may have something like an Arab Holy War on his hands. Inflamed by Italian attacks on their holy places, three separate Arab leaders in Egypt, Palestine and India have laid a curse on Mussolini, and the movement to declare a Holy War against Italy is sweeping the Middle East. The movement springs directly from the attempted Italian invasion of Egypt—

which seems not to be going very satisfactorily from the Italian point of view. If it should suffer a setback, the great Senussi sect, under its leader Said Idriss, would have a long score to settle with General Graziani, the Italian commander, for it was he who massacred the Senussi Arabs and drove them from their home in Libya.

Nor is it certain that the surrender of the Vichy Government to Japanese demands in Indo-China will be the last word in that important region. Hitler is undoubtedly pressing Japan, as he is pressing Spain, to join in the great Nazi drive for the domination of the world. If he could have invaded Britain, smashed London and left the United States to stand alone as the champion of freedom, his chances of success would have been brighter. He has not been able to invade Britain, he has not smashed London, and he must by this time have cause to doubt whether it is quite prudent to look upon the United States as a negligible quantity. He may even guess that the torpedoing of a British refugee ship with children aboard has not struck American opinion as an entirely laudable act. This may be one reason why Hitler is now so anxious to push on, to get results elsewhere even if he cannot, for the moment, win the Battle of Britain. He would like to confront ill-wishers and potential opponents with as many accomplished facts as possible. He feels he is running a race against the clock and wants to beat the clock.

It is not a good thing to be over-sanguine in any estimate of possibilities. I can claim never to have underestimated Hitler or Nazi Germany, never to have believed that they could be bought off with concessions or otherwise appeased, and never to have doubted that unless they were firmly checked in time they would bring disaster upon the free nations. If, today, Great Britain and the British Commonwealth were content merely to stand on the defensive, and to imagine that when they have beaten off Hitler's attacks they will have won the war, I should rate their chances of victory much lower than I rate them now. But even while London is being knocked about, while Egypt is preparing to resist Italian invasion, and Spain is being tempted to yield to Hitler's pressure, our Air Force is striking, night after night, deadly blows at the heart of German military power and, despite the wear and tear of war, is growing daily stronger. We are not defensively minded. We intend and are preparing

to overcome Hitler by making the German people understand that it will avail them nothing to seek world-wide dominion while they are being pounded and smashed at home.

In this great enterprise we have a positive purpose, far transcending that of military victory over any opponent. We are striving to put might in the service of right and justice so that enduring peace may be created in a human family redeemed from the curse and the outrage of war. In his Revolution of Destruction Hitler has swept away many impediments to the fulfilment of this purpose. He has trampled upon sovereignties, neutralities and nationalisms. He has shown the world what civilization is not and what barbarism is. He has left men and peoples of good will and good faith no excuse for future blindness or unwillingness to look facts in the face; and he will leave us no excuse if we do not interpret victory and extend its borders in the light of the method of freedom which has made Great Britain and the British Commonwealth what they are.

The other day Sir Maurice Gwyer, Chief Justice of the Federal Court of India, presented to the veteran poet and philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore, an honorary degree as doctor of literature on behalf of the University of Oxford. Sir Maurice Gwyer praised Tagore as a man who, 'if he thought that a wrong had been done, has not feared to challenge the British Raj itself and the authority of its magistrates, and who has boldly corrected the faults of his own fellow citizens.' Dr. Tagore, replying in Sanskrit, said:

'In an era of mounting anguish and vanishing worth, when disaster is fast overtaking countries and continents, with savagery let loose and brutal thirst for possession augmented by science, it may sound merely poetic to speak of any emerging principle of world-wide relationship. But violence, however immediately threatening, is circumscribed, and we who live beyond it, and dwell also in the larger reality of time, must renew our faith in the perennial growth of civilization toward an ultimate purpose.'

This, too, is our faith. And in resisting Hitler, with a steadfast resolve to overcome him and his savagery, Great Britain and the British Commonwealth feel they are jogging the elbow of time.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE BROADER WAR

October to Mid-November 1940

EARLY in October 1940 the pact signed in Berlin on September 27 between Germany, Japan and Italy for the creation of a 'new order' in Europe under the leadership of Germany and Italy, and of a 'new order in Eastern Asia' under the leadership of Japan, began to divert British attention from the closing phases of the Battle of Britain. On October 4 I spoke of this pact, and mentioned a fresh meeting between Hitler and Mussolini on the Brenner Pass. Upon Japanese policy I said:

My own view of the ultimate effects of Japanese policy is coloured by something which a wise Japanese statesman said to me, thirty-five years ago, after Japan had defeated Imperial Russia. He feared that victory had been too easily won, that it might go to the heads of the Japanese military party and lead it one day to try to conquer and absorb China. Twice before in Japanese history, he added, Japan had tried to do this; and twice the attempt had ended in disaster. He thought that a third attempt would end in the same way.

Since those distant days I have watched the progress of the Japanese military party, with the support of the Black Dragon Society and other militant organizations, towards the point at which—I have long been convinced—this war really began. That point was the sudden invasion of Manchuria by Japanese forces on the night of September 18, 1931. As a leading English newspaper wrote last Thursday, the League of Nations then 'made the mistake either of doing too little or

of saying too much.' I thought at the time that it did too little. Now the League is out of action and we are in the midst of the war. We in London are not allowed to forget it by day or by night. And if I read the pact between 'the brigands' rightly, it is directly connected with the Battle of Britain which we are steadily winning and Hitler is steadily losing. Without going so far as to agree with the jokers in Berlin who call the pact 'Ribbentrop's diplomatic Winter Distress Fund'—an allusion to the Nazi Winter Distress Fund of which the proceeds are mostly pocketed by Nazi officials—I do think that the desire or, rather, the urgent need to have something to put into Hitler's shop window was not unconnected with the conclusion of the pact.

If so, the question arises why Japan should have entered into it, why, in a word, she should have advertised her readiness to join Germany and Italy in the partition of the world. One answer may be that she, too, needs something for her shop window. Another answer may be that her Government has been badly informed about Hitler's prospects of winning the Battle of Britain, and, perhaps, about Italy's prospects of conquering Egypt. A curious point that cropped up the other day bears upon this question. Somebody asked whether the German General Staff, and Hitler in particular, really believe the reports which German pilots make about their raids on London and England. These pilots—or the proportion of them who return to tell the tale—give lurid accounts of the destruction they think they have wrought. It was so in the last war when the truth about the Zeppelin raids on England was not known to Hindenburg and the other German commanders until it was too late for them to make good the consequences of their error. If Hitler and the German General Staff really believe that Britain is almost beaten to her knees, and if they have persuaded Japan that this is so, the Japanese Government may have thought it safe to go in on the winning side, even at the risk of stirring up feeling in the United States and of giving Russia something to think about.

We do not yet know what Stalin and his advisers are thinking. Ribbentrop has been talking mysteriously about an extension of the pact which would bring Russia into line with it. At least, he appears to have given this impression to Señor Suñer, the Spanish Falangist leader, whose organs announced

the other day that Ribbentrop had some big news in his pocket. On the other hand there seems to have been a little disappointment in Berlin and Rome with the results of Señor Suñer's visit. It was found that he had no authority to commit General Franco, or Spain, to any definite line of action. Undoubtedly both Italy and Germany held out to Señor Suñer the prospect of Spanish expansion, in territory and influence, as a reward for co-operation with the Rome-Berlin axis. But by the time he got back to Spain he may have found that the Spanish Government was better informed of the course of the Battle of Britain than people were in Berlin and in Rome. However this may be, it does not affect immediately the important, and hitherto unanswered, question of Russian views upon Ribbentrop's new pact.

Pending proof to the contrary, I do not think that Soviet Russia is altogether likely to become a fourth wheel, or an auxiliary motor to Ribbentrop's, or Hitler's, three-wheeled car of triumph. I do not quite see how the interests of Russia would be served by leaving China in the lurch.

Much more than meets the eye depends not only upon the actual outcome of the Battle of Britain but upon the impression which Hitler's failure—hitherto—to invade England or to bomb us into surrender will make in other countries, including Germany and Italy. Remarkable and concordant accounts of the listlessness, the war-weariness and almost the apathy of the German people and of the German army have reached this country during the past week. I have discussed these accounts with a very competent non-British expert. I found that he accepted them as substantially true, for this reason. 'You must remember,' he said, 'that you in Great Britain have only been feeling the real war-strain for a year, at most, and that notwithstanding the bombing of London you are not yet feeling it fully. But the Germans have felt it for seven years. Hitler has kept them keyed up all the time. He rationed them, conscripted them and put them on a war basis long ago. There comes a moment when the stoutest nerves no longer respond to stimulants. If Hitler could have smashed Great Britain swiftly, the German people would have rejoiced because they would have seen a prospect of peace and of a slackening of a strain that has become almost intolerable. But now they see no prospect of a quick peace.'

They foresee more and more strain, and they wonder how it will all end. The British bombings of all the important German military and industrial centres cannot be hidden from them. Besides, most of them remember that up to the summer of 1918 Germany had conquered quite as much territory as Hitler now holds, and that by November 1918 she had to capitulate. Your people have never been through a shattering disappointment like that. So it does not astonish me to hear that the German armies in France and Belgium are listless and disheartened. They, at any rate, feel they are in the midst of hostile populations whom only the fear of an enduring German victory can keep in subjection.'

I give this opinion for what it may be worth. It is the opinion of a very experienced man. He, like many of us, is waiting for news of developments in North-East Africa. If anything should go wrong with the Italian, or the Italo-German, campaign against Egypt he thinks that things might move swiftly. He thinks also that the Italian offensive was timed to coincide with Hitler's invasion of Britain—which has not yet taken place. But, however events turn in the near future, he is persuaded that Hitler has lost the war. On the whole, for reasons too numerous to give in detail, I think he is right.

This does not mean that the autumn and winter will not be filled with stress and anxiety. We know this well. We know, too, that we cannot slacken our defensive-offensive for one moment. It must not be forgotten that while our splendid airmen, anti-aircraft gunners, observer corps and other elements of our home defence are standing up successfully to the worst Hitler can do, our bomber aircraft are taking heavy toll, night after night, of German war industries, communications and shipping in all the ports opposite our coasts. This offensive is not slackening. It is increasing in proportion as the strength of our air force increases and no amount of propaganda from Dr. Goebbels and the German press can prevent either the German people from knowing and feeling it, or the peoples of the countries under German occupation from getting an inkling of the truth.

The following week bore out my closing statement on October 4. German air-raids on England were intermittent, the heaviest being launched against London by 450 machines on October 7, but

Bomber Command of the R.A.F. hit Germany far more heavily, Berlin in particular getting an intense raid of four hours' duration. Of the German raids London had its full share, though German bombs were also dropped over Kent, Dorset, Lancashire and parts of Scotland and Wales.

By this time our civilian population had grown so used to the German raids that more attention was given to reports of Italian movements in the direction of Egypt and to the sending of German divisions into Roumania. In my talk on October 11 I said:

ITALY MOVES AGAINST EGYPT

We have seen this week the first result of the Brenner meeting between Hitler and Mussolini. Before long we may see others. How many troops Hitler has thrown into Roumania we do not know. They may be a few divisions sent to occupy the Roumanian oil-fields, or they may be the advance guard of a big army. At any rate it looks as though Hitler has got Roumania in his pocket and will be able to establish himself, for a while, on the Black Sea between Russia and the Balkans.

If this is the first result of the Brenner meeting what will be the second? There has been a report from Cairo which is denied in Rome that Field-Marshal Keitel, who is looked upon as the best brain in the German Army, has gone or is going to Libya to take command of the Italian forces there and to supersede Marshal Graziani, the Italian Commander-in-Chief. In Rome it is denied that Keitel has gone to Libya. It is not denied that he may be going. The story may have arisen from the fact that Keitel was present at the Brenner meeting whereas Graziani was not, though Graziani had been summoned to Rome from Libya and was on hand when Mussolini went to meet Hitler. We may see before long whether there was any truth in the story or not. For my part I hope there may be.

It is an open secret that a good many Italians think Hitler is getting much the best of the Berlin-Rome Axis arrangements, and that there is a good deal more 'Berlin' than 'Rome' about them. We heard from Belgrade, the Yugoslav capital, this week that Italians there are anything but pleased with the German occupation of Roumania. But Mussolini

has chosen his bed and has to lie on it, however uncomfortable a bedfellow Hitler may be. And if Mussolini has to let a German soldier manage the Libyan campaign against Egypt, Italian national vanity may be very deeply wounded.

It was a wound to Italian national vanity that helped Mussolini to start the Fascist movement. Italians believed they had been slighted and given short measure by their allies at the end of the last war. In order to hide its own shortcomings their Government fanned the flame of their resentment, and Mussolini took advantage of national disappointment. But now he is in a tight place. Unless Graziani's campaign against Egypt can succeed, all Mussolini's dreams about a great Italian Empire in North-East Africa may vanish. Graziani is looked upon as the most ruthless and efficient Italian soldier. He was expected to start a victorious offensive against Egypt more than a month ago, and to carry it through while Hitler was invading England. But his offensive seems to have stuck fast at Sidi Barrani, some sixty miles on the Egyptian side of the Libyan border. British aircraft and warships have harried him. If, as a result of the Brenner meeting, Keitel is put in charge of this offensive, it can only mean that Hitler thinks it essential to drive home the attack upon Egypt at all costs and without troubling about Italian national vanity.

Now Italian national vanity is a very important thing, as two illustrations, one of them historical and the other more or less personal, may help to show. In 1854, when the Crimean War began, the great Piedmontese statesman, Cavour, was so eager to win for Piedmont or, as it was then called, the Kingdom of Sardinia, a recognized standing in the councils of Europe that he offered to join Great Britain and France in their fight against Russia. The offer was accepted, and Piedmontese (or 'Sardinian') divisions were sent to the Crimea. But Cavour stipulated that they should be brigaded with French and British troops so that the national self-conceit of the Italian troops would be stimulated. He wanted his soldiers to be put on their mettle. In this he was shrewd. The Italians fought well. Cavour won his place as an ally at the Paris Peace Conference of 1856, and was able to mature his plans for the liberation of a great part of Italy in the Franco-Italian war of 1859 against Austria.

This is the historical illustration. What I have called the

personal illustration is more recent. At the end of October 1917 the Italian armies were disastrously defeated by an Austro-German offensive at Caporetto. In order to prevent a panic and to back up the Italians, three French and three British divisions were ordered to reinforce the Italian army which was trying to stand on the line of the River Piave. Marshal Foch, who was then the French Chief of Staff, wanted the French and British divisions to go into the line at once so as to stiffen the Italians, but a French military representative in Rome protested strongly against this idea. He argued that it would wound Italian national vanity, and would make Italian soldiers believe that the French and the British despised them. Then, if the Austro-German offensive should be resumed, the Italian troops would break and run and leave the French and the British divisions to be overwhelmed. Therefore, this French soldier argued, the French and British reinforcements ought to be held in reserve, and the Italians ought to be put on their mettle to hold the Piave line by themselves.

At that moment I happened to be in Paris. Philippe Berthelot, the Director-General of the French Foreign Office, who had great influence with Marshal Foch, told me of the situation and asked my opinion as that of a man who had lived a good many years in Italy. I said emphatically that the French soldier in Rome was right and Marshal Foch wrong, and that it might be fatal to send the French and British divisions into the line at once. Exactly what happened I do not know, but I do know that Marshal Foch changed his opinion and that the French and British divisions were kept for some time in reserve. Meanwhile the Italians held the line alone.

So, if Keitel were put in control of the Italian offensive against Egypt, with or without the support of German troops, I should not look for complete harmony between the Italians and the Germans. Keitel may be a better soldier than Graziani. I am not a soldier, but I should not care to command Italian forces if their national vanity had been wounded.

However this may be, many signs point to the conclusion which I suggested last week—that Hitler is in a hurry and sorely needs something for his shop window. Not only have his preparations for the invasion of England been hung up,

even if they have not altogether come to grief, but the havoc which British bombers are playing with them, and with war industries and communications inside Germany, must be making Hitler anxious to allay the doubts of his own people whether he is really winning the war. Besides—and this is a point which is sometimes overlooked—Hitler has a heavy unemployment problem on his hands. It is not quite the same sort of unemployment problem which he was thought to have solved when he put the German unemployed into labour camps and began to spend £800,000,000 a year on rearmament. How many million men he has now under arms I cannot judge. But, apart from the numbers employed in the occupation of Poland, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland and occupied France, he has certainly got a very considerable army in barracks inside Germany. These men get little or no leave and are not allowed to mix with civilians. Unless they are given active employment somewhere, they may grow restless.

The Prime Minister told the House of Commons last Tuesday that notwithstanding all the damage our bombers have done to Hitler's arrangements for invasion 'the enemy has certainly got enough shipping and barges to throw 500,000 men in a single night on to salt water—or into it.' Hitler may still try to use these men against us, though the gales of the past week have not lessened the difficulties that confront him. Should Hitler decide to postpone the invasion of England, and try to strike at British power in North Africa and the Near and Middle East, he would naturally wish to have some swift results in those regions to offset the disappointment of his failure to subdue us at home. This may be one reason for his thrust into Roumania. It would also be a reason for an effort to speed up the offensive against Egypt. There must be some urgent background to a policy which, among other risks, involves the risk of causing a certain degree of anxiety in Moscow.

However friendly Russo-German relations may be, the Russians are too well-informed not to know that the control of Roumania and her oil-fields, by German troops, was part of an anti-Russian plan which the German Staff considered more than four years ago. It was an ambitious plan of which the main object was to turn the defences of Russia from the south-west and to get a footing on the Black Sea as a basis

for German operations against the great Russian oil-fields of Baku. By seizing or destroying the Baku oil-fields the Germans calculated that they could paralyse Russian aviation and cripple Russian agriculture which depends on tractors. I doubt whether Hitler intends to attack Russia in the near future. Such an attack might not give him the quick results he wants; and, since the Russo-German agreement of August 23, 1939, Russia has strengthened her strategic position by occupying the Baltic States, overcoming Finland and re-annexing Bessarabia. All the same it is not likely that people in Moscow will be delighted to see Hitler drive a German wedge through Roumania and, perhaps, Bulgaria to the Black Sea between Russia and the Balkans. In Moscow, too, the thought of Hitler's unemployed soldiers may be causing a little anxiety; and this may help to explain why nobody seems able to get a very clear notion of Russian policy just now.

If Russia were solely a European country it might be easier to judge her outlook. But she is even more Asiatic than European. And it is here that the alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan comes into play. The Japanese side of that alliance seems to be aimed chiefly at the United States—which has not been slow to respond to the challenge—but it has also a secondary point against Russia and China. That Great Britain and the British Dominions in the Pacific are not indifferent to it appears from the welcome decision, announced by Mr. Winston Churchill last Tuesday, that the Burma Road will be reopened on October 17. By this time the Government of Tokyo may be wondering whether a little prudence would not be the better part of valorous truculence, and whether, if Hitler has not yet won the Battle of Britain, it would not be wise to wait and see whether he can win the battle of Egypt and of the Middle East.

We are watching all these things from London with deep interest and quiet confidence. Once again Mr. Churchill expressed our feelings exactly in his great speech this week. We liked his reminder that 'dark months of trial and tribulation lie before us, great dangers, more misfortunes, many disappointments; that death and sorrow will be the companions of our journey; hardship our garment; constancy and valour our only shield.' We feel, with him, that 'our qualities and deeds must burn and glow through the gloom of Europe

until they become the veritable beacon of its salvation.' We are glad that our Prime Minister spoke no word of facile reassurance, and that while he dwelt upon the indomitable spirit of Londoners and showed our losses in true proportion, he understood that we resent soothing statements. He had every reason to say that 'neither by material damage nor by slaughter will the people of the British Empire be turned from their solemn and inexorable purpose.'

I, who have been humbly trying to make this truth known week after week, rejoice that it should be so firmly and authoritatively uttered. We face the dark days of winter in good heart.

ENGLAND'S 'SENSUAL PLEASURE IN DEATH'

Between October 11 and 18 we had the heaviest night raids of German aircraft upon London since the beginning of the Battle of Britain. As our night-fighter technique was not then developed to the pitch of efficiency it was presently to attain, we suffered much damage and a good many casualties. Yet these incidents did not deflect attention from the wider pattern of the war. So I began my talk on October 18 by saying:

Much has been going on this week in many parts of the world. The difficulty is to sort things out so as to see them in some kind of proportion. There is the German drive through Roumania to the Near East; there is the handsome licking which the British cruiser *Ajax* gave to a number of Italian warships in the Mediterranean; there are the terrific air-raids which our bombers have carried out over Germany; and the smashing bombardments of Cherbourg and Dunkirk by our Navy. And there is President Roosevelt's declaration that the defence of the Western hemisphere includes for the United States 'the right to the peaceful use of the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.'

Among debit items on the weekly balance sheet we have the heaviest night raids of German aircraft upon London since the beginning of the Battle of Britain; and, perhaps, the appointment of Señor Suñer, the Spanish Falangist leader—fresh from his visits to Berlin and Rome—to be the Foreign Minister of Spain. We have also news from Syria of the pro-

gressing demoralization of what was the fine French army there; and we have the uncertainty whether Yugoslavia and Greece may not soon be exposed to formidable German and Italian pressure or attack. Between these credit and debit items how is one to strike a true balance?

The other day an English writer put forward the view that if and when the enemy offensive develops in the Near and Middle East, the bombing of London and the Battle of Britain will become what he called a 'side-show.' Another well-known writer argues that in the days to come the failure of the German air offensive to destroy British resistance last summer will be described as one of the decisive battles of the world. I think the latter view sounder than the former—for reasons that are psychological rather than military or strategic. The Battle of Britain may not yet be the decisive battle of the war, but the qualities it has revealed both in our airmen and in the ordinary Briton, to say nothing of the indomitable Cockney, strike me as being the very things that are going to decide this war, and to decide it in our favour.

Dr. Goebbels, I see, is not entirely of this opinion. Deeply though I grieve to differ from that eminent purveyor of Nazi truth, I make bold to suggest, with such respect as he may merit, that his reading of our character is quite wrong. One of his organs declares that the ability of Londoners to carry on under what it calls 'the continuous hail of bombs amid seething wreckage and raging flames, without a roof over their heads, without sleep, and with only a slender food supply' is not due to Cockney toughness but to something different. This something, Dr. Goebbels assures us, is that 'England approaches death with sensual pleasure, smacks its lips over every phase of the conflict, and willingly bears every humiliation and every cynicism if only, in dying, it can cling to the hope of dragging the enemy down into the abyss also. . . . Thus is solved the puzzle of British toughness and endurance.'

Though I am not a true-born Cockney I have been a Londoner for some thirty years, and I have seen a little of my fellow-Londoners during the past week. The one thing I have not noticed among them is any 'sensual pleasure' at the approach of the possibility of death. They are not degenerate enough for that. What I have noticed is a very different feeling. If one stays in London all the time this feeling is not so obvious. It is too general, almost too commonplace to be

talked about or thought about. But if one gets away into the comparative quiet of the countryside, as I did at the end of last week, and hears people asking, as a matter of great interest, whether a bomb fell at some place four or five miles away, one comes back to London and is vividly conscious that one has returned to the front line. It is the 'front-line feeling' that makes Londoners and Cockneys stand up to the worst Hitler can do, and to take it as all in the day's work or in the night's adventure. At the front, in war-time, anybody may be hit. Tom may be unlucky, Dick may be lucky, and Harry may have a hairbreadth escape. The important thing is that the line should hold and get ready to hit back. In this spirit Londoners are holding the line, and will hold it, until the time comes to hit back so hard that neither Hitler, Goering, Goebbels nor the other Nazis will have a leg to stand upon.

When will that time come? Nobody can fix a date; but everybody with a spark of imagination can see it casting its shadow before. I fancy that if any of us could pass unobserved among the troops and the people along or behind the Dutch, the Belgian and the French coasts from Amsterdam to Brest, and could listen to what the Germans are saying to each other, and to what the Dutch, the Belgians and the French are saying to themselves, a pretty shrewd notion would be gleaned that the Germans in those regions have already got a good deal more than they can take. An estimate that between 40,000 and 50,000 German troops were killed or wounded during the bombardment of Cherbourg alone by the Air Force and the Navy this week may or may not be accurate, and I have no information to confirm the report that 12,000 wounded German soldiers have been sent to hospital as far south as Bordeaux and approximately 7,000 to Paris. But I do know that the men in Hitler's barges and other vessels, who were to have invaded England, have had a most terrible mauling, and that the civilian losses we have suffered from German bombs—which have fallen pretty thick upon London this week—are a mere fraction of the military losses that we have inflicted upon our would-be invaders.

Dr. Goebbels, I see, has also been shrieking loudly about the civilian casualties suffered in Berlin and elsewhere as the result of our bombing of German oil plants, war factories,

power stations and railways. He may well shriek. Civilian losses might not trouble him much if it were not for the devastation of Germany's material war resources; and he is too well informed not to know that the Empire Air Training Scheme, with the backing of the United States, will make our present effort and achievements look trifling in the months to come. Only yesterday I read an eloquent passage in Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, in which he warned Germans never to indulge in the fantastic notion of imitating Alexander the Great by attempting to overrun the Near and Middle East, but always to bear in mind that the consolidation and expansion of Germany's 'living space' in the heart of Europe must be their aim. Yet now, it would seem, Hitler is trying his hand at an Alexander-like adventure in the Near and Middle East while the Royal Air Force, with its gallant Polish, Czechoslovak, Dutch and American squadrons, are steadily expanding the devastated space in the German centre of Europe. We may still have a long way to go; but we are on the road.

Beyond these incidents of the fighting there lie, in my own personal and entirely unofficial view, two other matters of very great importance. One is the unprecedented fact that at a time when the United States is not at war more than sixteen million American men should have been conscripted for the army without serious objection or opposition. The other is what lies behind President Roosevelt's words when he said:

'No combination of the Dictator countries of Europe or Asia will halt us in the path we see ahead . . . or will stop the help we are giving to almost the last free people now fighting to hold them at bay. The men and women of Britain have shown how a free people defend what they know to be right. Their heroic defence will be recorded for all time. It will be perpetual proof that democracy, when put to the test, can show the stuff of which it is made.'

If those words, and all that they imply, did not ring like a death-knell in the ears of Hitler and his fellow-gangsters, they must be hard of hearing. We do not know what will come out of this war. Rightly or wrongly, the Prime Minister told the House of Commons last Tuesday that the time had not come when any official declaration of war aims could be made 'beyond the very carefully considered general state-

ments which have already been published.' He added that nobody thinks we are fighting this war merely to maintain things as they were before the war; and that we are, among other things, fighting in order to survive. 'When our capacity to do that is more generally recognized throughout the world', Mr. Churchill went on, 'when the conviction we have about it here becomes more general, then we shall be in a good position to take a further view of what we shall do with the victory when it is won.'

Mr. Churchill's refusal to be drawn into a more definite statement of our war aims has been criticized in some quarters as showing unwillingness to take the initiative in what is sometimes called 'the strategy of ideas.' I doubt whether this criticism is justified. The Prime Minister is certainly not afraid of bold conceptions, nor does he lack constructive imagination. He may well be the best judge of what can and ought to be said at a given moment. The only criticism I have to offer is not of what he said but of the way certain German and neutral propagandists have twisted what he said. On Tuesday night I heard a wireless announcement from a neutral country to the effect that Great Britain could not state her war aims because she was fighting for her existence. The intention doubtless was to give the impression that we are so hard pressed that we can think of nothing except how to sell our lives most dearly; and this impression is not far from the idea of Dr. Goebbels that we are willing to bear everything if only, in dying, we can cling to the hope of dragging the enemy down into the abyss also.

Dreadful though war is, I feel at times almost inclined to chuckle when I see how very wide of the mark are enemy interpretations of our state of mind. If there is one thing we do not want to do, it is to drag even enemy peoples down into the abyss with ourselves. We are not candidates for the abyss. We believe ourselves to be—indeed, we know we are—the champions of an ordered freedom which shall be the foundation of a better world for others as well as for ourselves. If we did not believe in this freedom, if we did not wish to share it with other peoples, we might fight on and save our own skins without saving our own souls. If ever there were a war in which material considerations played no part in our eyes, this is such a war. Hitler might offer us to share with him the rule of the inhabited globe. We should answer: 'Get thee behind

me, Satan!' He may think that when he has absorbed Roumania, driven the Balkans in double harness, conquered Egypt and Northern Africa with the help of Italy and the complicity of the 'Men of Vichy,' he will then be able to bid us choose between submission and destruction. Even then we should answer: 'Do your worst; we shall not yield.' But things are not going like that. The worst Hitler, Mussolini and their accomplices can do will be quite unequal to our best; and our best will ultimately mean the redemption even of the deluded German and Italian peoples from the foul heresies which they have been drilled and bullied into mistaking for the doctrine of true glory.

At bottom it is the deep conviction of our people that we are fighting doughtily for noble ends which prompts their desire for our 'war aims' to be more clearly defined and more loudly proclaimed. Mr. Churchill's caution may spring from a Biblical feeling that he who girdeth on his armour should not boast as he that putteth it off. As his speeches and writings show, he is a master of that peculiarly English form of expression which emphasizes by understatement. Yet he knows, as we all know, that we are not in this war for our physical survival alone but for the survival and the development, and the extension to as large a number as possible of human beings, of those principles of individual freedom, personal responsibility, righteous dealing, and service of the truth that have inspired all that has been best in British annals, and today inspire both our own efforts and the goodwill of the United States towards us. For a British Prime Minister to say this, while we have still to prove in arms our power to fulfil our inmost purpose, might seem vainglorious; yet it is well that the world should know that we lack neither the power nor the resolve to fulfil this purpose in and through victory.

THE 'BLITZ' BY NIGHT

German night raids on England and British attacks on German war factories and harbours filled the week between October 18 and 25. Some cities in the Midlands were badly damaged; and on October 21 Liverpool had its two-hundredth raid while London lost count of air-raided warnings and hardly knew whether

an 'All Clear' or an 'Alert' was being sounded by the sirens. Total 'Battle of Britain' figures up to the end of that week were 2,762 German and 780 British machines lost—a ratio of more than three to one.

Apart from the actual fighting the main event of the week was a broadcast talk to the French people by Mr. Winston Churchill. News from France soon showed that his talk was meant to thwart a manœuvre which Hitler was preparing. Hitler had an interview with Laval in Paris so as to win Pétain and the Vichy Government for Franco-German 'co-operation.' Then Hitler went to the Spanish border to meet General Franco. In my talk I indulged in some reflections upon the background to these excursions:

This background, if I see it rightly, is that Hitler's principal weapon has been blunted. That weapon is blackmail by terrorism. Hitler never intended to fight a big war. His method was to frighten everybody, by threats of destruction, into giving him all he wanted. By this method, and by systematic brutality, he had succeeded in making himself master of the German people. Up to September 1939 he had successfully applied the same method to other countries. Then he struck a snag in the form of Polish resistance. So he felt obliged to smash Poland with the immense army and air force that he had built up to lend substance to his threats. But he still hoped that Great Britain and France would not make war upon him in earnest. He offered them peace—on his own terms—and hoped his terms would be accepted. When they were not accepted he got ready to overawe Denmark, to conquer Norway with the help of his Quislings, and to extend the same treatment to Holland, Belgium and France. His success must have surpassed his wildest dreams. He was actually in Paris before the date fixed in his timetable. Then his triumph was to be crowned by the capitulation of England to his threats, his overwhelming air power or actual invasion.

Hitler believed that nothing could withstand him. Strange though the notion seems to us, a good part of the world believed it too. It was thought that we should be terrorized, that whatever our fighting forces might be able to do, the common people of England would lose their nerve and go down before him. He, and those who believed that this

would happen, were mistaken. Our Air Force defeated the pick of Goering's air squadrons in three great battles. The Air Force and the Navy smashed up Hitler's redoubtable preparations to invade us. Yet, in any event, London was to be reduced to rubble and ashes by persistent bombing. The common people were to get more than they could stand. Hitler's wireless announced in advance, again and again, that London *was* smashed and that her people were cowering, terror-stricken, amid the ruins of their homes. Again, a good part of the world believed this tale—until its untruthfulness was made known by so many witnesses that even the German people and the German armies in France began to feel that they had been deceived.

Among the neutrals, and among the French people in occupied and unoccupied France, doubt gradually spread whether, after all, Hitler had not met more than his match, whether he was certain to win the war. This doubt was increased by the lurid accounts of the destruction of London that were sent throughout the world by the German propaganda machine. If any people could stand up to punishment so terrific, it was thought, and not only stand up but hit back so hard that the German propaganda machine shrieked with rage at British ruthlessness, something must have gone wrong with German plans and with German terrorism.

Something had gone wrong. Alongside of the gallant efficiency of our airmen and sailors, and the determined spirit of our working men and women in the aircraft and other war factories, the grim gaiety of the common people of England had put Hitler's calculations out of gear. They had blunted his sharpest weapon.

During the past week this conclusion has grown so strong in my mind as to convince me that Hitler feels bound now to make a supreme effort to regain the terroristic prestige which he has lost. It is not his way to rush from place to place in order to meet those whom he hopes to overawe or to persuade. His way has usually been to make them come to him. So it was with poor Schuschnigg of Austria, with President Hacha of Czechoslovakia, and with the various foreign representatives who were summoned to Berchtesgaden or to Berlin. But now Hitler turns up suddenly in Paris to confer with his accomplice, Laval; and hurries thence to the Spanish border so that General Franco may have an opportunity of meeting

him. He has even offered, it seems, to confer with Marshal Pétain. All this is very unlike the blustering, brow-beating Hitler whom the world has seen during the past three or four years—but it is very like the Hitler whom Germany saw in the earlier years when he was trying, with the help of von Papen, to wheedle President von Hindenburg into giving him office. He was conscious of the dangers and difficulties then. He managed to get round or to overcome them. I think he is conscious of the dangers and difficulties that beset him now.

There have been a dozen signs during the past week that the temper of the French people is changing. The Germans themselves have provided most of them by repeated warnings and threats to the French against pro-British manifestations. And I have been reading some of the French newspapers published at Vichy under the direct control of the Vichy Government. They discuss the possibility that Great Britain may not lose the war. They allude to the strong reaction in the United States against the pact between Germany, Italy and Japan, and to the 'inexhaustible resources' which the United States is likely to bring to the aid of Great Britain.

The most Anglophobe of these journals adjure their readers, in frenzied tones, not to look for help to England but to entrust their future to Franco-German co-operation in a Europe set free from British democratic influences. All this strikes me as interesting, and perhaps significant.

Hitler, of course, is well aware of the change in the mood of the French people. The British Government are probably as well informed on this point as Hitler can be. And this may be why Mr. Winston Churchill spoke to France in such downright fashion last Monday night. I listened to his talk both in English and in French. I have often heard him speak French. It is not the French of the Comédie Française. And I wondered, at first, why he should not have got some Frenchman to translate his talk for him and to deliver the translation with a good French accent. But while I was listening to Mr. Churchill's French version, and to the robust English accent with which he delivered it, I reflected that nobody could possibly mistake it for French propaganda from London. The German-controlled radio stations in France did their utmost to jam it—and did not quite succeed. French listeners

could hear and understand pretty well all of it; and though they may have smiled, now and again, at this or that tone or expression, they will have felt that they were getting the truth at last straight from the horse's mouth. It was a great piece of work, well done in the nick of time.

There is no need for me now to repeat Mr. Churchill's words or to echo all his pungent phrases which have rung round the earth. Yet there were two passages in his talk that deserve attention because they reveal the spirit of British policy. The first was that we do not forget the ties and links that unite us to France, 'and we are persevering steadfastly and in good heart in the cause of European freedom and *fair dealing for the common people of all countries* for which, with you (people of France) we drew the sword.' The second passage came at the end, after the exclamation: 'Long live France!' It ran: 'Long live also the forward march of *the common people in all the lands* towards their just and true inheritance—towards better days.'

It cannot have been by chance that the Prime Minister struck this note of 'the common people' twice over. If I had to guess why he struck it I should say that it is because he, like all of us, is under the influence of the way in which the common people of Britain have made this war their own, how they are standing up to the worst Hitler can do, because they feel that Nazism threatens not only their country and their lives but everything in the world that makes life worth living for decent, ordinary folk. Mr. Churchill was careful not to exclude the common people of any land from active or passive participation in this cause. He excluded only Hitler and all the Nazi gang and their works, 'this evil man, this monstrous abortion of hatred and deceit' as he called him—though by implication he excluded also Hitler's 'little Italian accomplice who is trotting along, hopefully and hungrily, but rather wearily and very timidly, at his side.' Unless I am mistaken there is the germ of a whole programme of political, social and economic progress, to say nothing of international, or inter-popular, co-operation in the British Prime Minister's words.

What are the prospects that our victory will bring this germ to growth and fruition after our task 'of cleansing Europe from the Nazi pestilence and saving the world from the new Dark Ages' shall have been accomplished? Mr.

Churchill said: 'It will not be so long. The story is not yet finished. We are on Hitler's track, and so are our friends across the Atlantic Ocean.' Therefore he asked the French people not to hinder us if they cannot yet help us. There are rumours and, perhaps, something more substantial than rumours, that even at Vichy Mr. Churchill's appeal has not fallen altogether on deaf ears, that Marshal Pétain has not accepted the proposals for 'co-operation' with Germany brought to him by Laval after a conference with Hitler, and that on no account will France make war upon Britain or hand over her warships to the enemy. Such rumours and reports need to be received with caution. As an Italian proverb puts it: 'If they are roses they will bloom.' We may be quite sure that Hitler will strain every nerve to prevent them from blossoming, and will do his utmost to swing, cajole or bully Mediterranean countries still neutral into throwing in their lot with his. Should he fail he would, indeed, suffer a grievous setback. We have soberly to consider the possibility that he may not fail or that, at the very least, he may extort some degree of compliance with his designs. Whatever he may be able to do, we shall not flinch or abate our efforts to hasten the day when he, with his accomplices, dupes and victims, will be compelled to recognize that the forces enlisted under the banner of freedom are stronger and more numerous than the forces which march under Hitler's emblem of police-ridden enslavement.

Among our other efforts we have to redouble our determination to make the truth known. Warnings have reached us that Hitler and Goebbels are about to begin a campaign of world-wide deception that will put into the shade all their previous achievements in untruthfulness. This campaign may be a new application of Hitler's doctrine that a big lie is more readily believed than a little lie because nobody imagines that anybody could tell so big a lie. We need to make known the fact, which our Air Ministry has tardily revealed this week, that more than a month ago, on September 16, our Air Force broke up and destroyed Hitler's preparations to invade us, and that it has been progressively destroying them ever since. We have inflicted on Hitler the first major defeat he has suffered. It will not be the last; and against his campaign of big lies it must be our business to make this big truth resound throughout the world.

THE BROADER WAR

ITALY INVADES GREECE

On October 28 the area of the war was enlarged and, to some extent, its complexion altered by a sudden Italian invasion of Greece. Though German air-raids on Great Britain continued, and British attacks upon centres of German war industry were unceasing, public attention was immediately focused on the doings of Italy and their possible effects upon the British position in the Mediterranean. In my talk on November 1 I gave some account of these matters and also suggested a possible reason for Mussolini's invasion of Greece, early on the very day when he and Hitler were to meet at Florence. (Later information confirmed this interpretation.) My talk ran:

The big news this week is the Italian invasion of Greece. At 3 a.m. last Monday morning Italy delivered an ultimatum to the Greek Prime Minister, General Metaxas, demanding Greek assent, by 6 a.m., to the free passage of Italian troops in order that they might occupy certain strategic points with 'full respect for the sovereignty of Greece.' The Italian Minister could not say what the strategic points would be. General Metaxas rejected the ultimatum and said he looked upon it as a declaration of war.

Without waiting for the ultimatum to expire at 6 a.m., the Italians launched an attack across the Albanian border at 5.30 a.m.—before Greece had been able to order general mobilization. When the order was issued at 6 a.m. it was enthusiastically obeyed.

During the day King George of Greece received a message from King George of England, saying: 'We are with you in this struggle; your cause is our cause; we shall be fighting against a common foe. . . . We may hope, indeed, that we are already near the turn of the tide, when the power of the aggressor will begin to ebb and our own growing might to prevail.' Simultaneously Mr. Winston Churchill assured General Metaxas that Great Britain will give Greece every possible help.

While these things were going on Mussolini and Hitler were meeting at Florence. I said last week that the Hitler who hurries all over Europe is not the kind of Hitler who used to order his victims or accomplices to appear before him at

Berchtesgaden or Berlin, but rather the kind of Hitler who, early in 1933, was anxiously pulling every wire to get old President von Hindenburg to entrust him with office. In a few days Hitler went from Berlin to Paris, there to confer with Laval; thence to the Spanish border to try to persuade General Franco to link up with him; then back to some point in France to practise his blandishments upon Marshal Pétain; and then, by an undisclosed route, to meet Mussolini at Florence. William II of Germany, who was known as the 'Travelling Kaiser' and now enjoys Hitler's protection at Doorn in Holland, never equalled this performance. What does it all mean?

It may mean several things but it certainly means one thing in particular. Failure to invade England or to win the Battle of Britain compels Hitler to seek a decision elsewhere. He knows quite well that he has suffered a setback, that his triumphal progress has been checked, that his spell has been broken, and that the peoples he has subjugated are aware of it. Hitler knows, too, that he cannot reach a decision by himself as long as Britain is unsubdued, and is crippling his war factories and communications in Germany. His propaganda used to tell the French that Britain would fight to the last drop of blood of the last French soldier, but would be very careful not to risk British lives. Like many other habitual liars Hitler attributed to Great Britain tactics which he himself would be ready to employ. So, in order to reach a decision elsewhere, that is to say, in the Mediterranean, he wishes to make Spain, Italy and, if possible, Bulgaria fight for him. He is understood to have tempted General Franco with offers of a large portion of Morocco, to have held out to Marshal Pétain a prospect of 'collaboration' with Germany on terms calculated to appeal to the aged head of the Vichy Government, and to have urged Italy to do something more than the little she has already done if she wishes to get her share of the loot in European France and especially in North Africa. Above all, Hitler is bound to restore, if he can, the belief that his triumph is certain, and that he will treat as his enemies those who do not help to hasten its advent.

I should have liked to be present at his conversations with Mussolini in Florence. Without attaching much, if any, importance to the rumours of friction between the partners in the Rome-Berlin Axis, I can well imagine that Hitler's

attempt to win over Marshal Pétain to a policy of active collaboration with Germany, while urging Italy to prosecute more boldly her part of the war, is something like an attempt to square the circle. If French collaboration with Germany should mean giving up to Italy the Department of the Maritime Alps—which includes a good part of the French Riviera—the Island of Corsica, the greater part of Tunis and a slice of Algiers, it is easy to understand that Marshal Pétain would find the price too high, whatever Laval might be ready to pay. But if, on the other hand, Hitler is obliged to tell Mussolini that Italy cannot have all the French territory she covets because France would otherwise be unwilling to collaborate with Germany, it is not hard to imagine that Mussolini would pull a wry face and murmur something about a bird in the hand being worth two in the bush. And if Hitler should hint, no matter how delicately, that Marshal Graziani's offensive from Libya against Egypt has been unaccountably slow, Mussolini might reply, less delicately, that Hitler's conquest of Great Britain has been even slower, and that the two offensives were planned to proceed victoriously at one and the same moment. Yet Mussolini would have to be careful to keep up appearances, and not to run the risk of wounding Italian national vanity by seeming to 'get a move on' merely under Hitler's orders. And this may be why the attack upon Greece began suddenly in the early morning of the day when Hitler was to meet Mussolini at Florence. It would enable Mussolini to forestall Hitler's reproaches or pressure by pointing out that Italy had already moved of her own accord and in her own interest.

If my reading of the psychological position in the enemy camp is not altogether wide of the mark, a good deal may depend upon the course of the Italian attack against Greece. According to my own information the spirit of the Greek army and of the Greek people is good. Efforts will certainly be made to undermine it from without, and to prove that British help can be of no avail. Reports—doubtless of German origin—are being sent out from various Balkan centres that Germany will mediate between Italy and Greece so as to save the Greek people from disaster. I should be surprised if the Greeks were ready to accept any kind of mediation. Their army fought very gallantly in the two Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913, and rendered no little help to the Allied cause in the

Great War. Their country abounds in strong military positions, and its roads do not facilitate the movement of large mechanized forces. Besides, the British Air Force has already knocked about the strong Italian position on the island of Stampalia—the nearest Italian base to Athens. And the British Navy has mined strategic zones in Greek waters. Moreover, it seems likely that if Germany and Italy should urge Bulgaria to move against Greece, the Turkish army would not remain inactive. Indeed, the whole Balkan peninsula would then be likely to flare up.

This does not mean that the outlook in the Eastern Mediterranean is altogether unfavourable to Italian and German designs. Even more than in the Battle of Britain the outcome of the struggle in and around the Mediterranean may depend upon sea power. As long as Great Britain controls the Straits of Gibraltar in the west, and the Suez Canal and the Red Sea in the east, the chances of an enemy victory should be poor. In the Eastern Mediterranean the air power which defeated Hitler's attempts to subdue England depends, even more than it depended in the Battle of Britain, upon British mastery of the seas. It is this mastery which Hitler and Mussolini are striving, and will strive, to break by every means; and our losses of merchant tonnage last week—195,000 tons, the highest total of any week since the evacuation of Dunkirk—proves that we cannot afford to overlook the harm they may do. If they could persuade the Vichy Government to give them the use of French naval and air bases in North Africa, or even to put French warships at their disposal, our task would be rendered correspondingly heavier. But we have now had several months to get ready for any combination that may be brought against us; and if I say that our most competent military and naval authorities face the future in good heart and without any kind of trepidation I am certainly not overstating the case.

Nor am I sure that Marshal Pétain's acceptance of what he has called 'the principles of collaboration' with Germany implies readiness on his part to place either French naval and air bases or French warships at Hitler's disposal. In his broadcast address to the French nation last Wednesday the Marshal said that the application of these 'principles of collaboration' will be discussed later. Collaboration, he added, 'must be sincere. All thought of aggression must be

excluded from it.' He did not say whether he suspected Germany or Italy of harbouring thoughts of aggression, or whether his own people are hoping one day to rise against their conquerors. It is clear only that the Marshal—unlike his chief lieutenant and new Foreign Secretary, Laval—is inclined to mark time for the moment.

Nevertheless the question remains whether, in the last resort, it is Pétain or Laval who rules unoccupied France. I have met both men in the past. For Marshal Pétain it is still possible to feel some degree of respect, however mistaken one may believe him to be. For Laval it is impossible to feel any kind of respect. He is totally devoid of convictions or scruples of any sort, and he has unbounded confidence in himself. His ignorance is encyclopædic. Until he first came to England as French Prime Minister some years ago he had never seen the sea or been abroad. So he wished to get an impression of the English people. By way of getting it he insisted on going to the poorest district of London and spent some hours in visiting the slums of Whitechapel where the population is less English than in any other part of the metropolis. Fortified with this knowledge of England he then proceeded to negotiate with the British Government. In 1935 he was convinced that he could 'do a deal' with Mussolini about Abyssinia and get the better of the Italian Dictator. Mussolini easily got the better of him. Then he thought he could circumvent Stalin by giving the Communists a free hand in French politics—and it was the Communists who helped to overthrow him. Now he thinks he can make rings round Hitler, and is probably unconscious that Hitler wants to use him against England with little care for Laval or for France. In a word, Pierre Laval is a 'bad lot'; and among the many things that are hard to understand is the inexplicable fact that Marshal Pétain should accept him as his right-hand man. It is this fact that has prompted the leader of free France, General de Gaulle, to take over the exclusive right to speak for France and to declare the decisions of the Vichy Government null and void.

Everything I hear from France confirms the impression that the great majority of the French people are yearning and praying for a British victory and are straining their ears to catch every echo from abroad that points to it. Like the rest of the world they are waiting, too, for the result of the

Presidential election in the United States, not because they believe that the re-election of President Roosevelt or the success of Mr. Wendell Willkie would change anything in the determination of the American people to aid Great Britain and her Allies, but because they feel the full attention of the United States will then be given to the issues of the war. On the continent of Europe the belief has been widespread that Hitler hoped to present the United States with an accomplished fact, that is to say, an unquestionable German triumph, before the Presidential election could be decided. In this, if it was his hope, Hitler has been disappointed; and his disappointment may not be without its effect upon the spirit of the German people. Meanwhile the battle of the Mediterranean is beginning to rage; and unless I am greatly mistaken its outcome, too, will convince both the German and the Italian peoples that the hour of retribution for the misdeeds of their leaders will assuredly strike.

NIGHT 'BLITZ'—AND GREECE

Hitler did his best in the first week of November to divert our attention from the Italian invasion of Greece and from the war in the Mediterranean. He gave us the longest air-raid we had experienced since the war began. Yet if his intention was to keep us from thinking about Greece we did not fulfil it. So I said on November 8:

It has been a strange week in London. One night, when the weather was very bad, we were almost free from German raiders, and rather wondered what had happened to them and to us. Two nights later we had the longest air-raid warning since the war began—fourteen hours from dark to dawn—and not a few bombings. If the bombings were not quite so heavy or so continuous as they had often been before, the noise of our anti-aircraft batteries was, at intervals, louder than ever, so that only the most determined sleepers could get unbroken rest. Yet, all the while, we had the curious feeling that we were no longer quite in the centre of the picture. The centre or, rather, the centres, seemed to be on the frontier between Greece and Albania, and in the United States.

The Greeks have done splendidly. They have given Mussolini something to think about; and our people are glad to know that we are doing what we can to help them. We might have been able to do more if the Greek Government had not been so careful to preserve strict neutrality until the Italian attack had actually begun. So careful was it that Mussolini and Hitler were convinced that Greece would only make a show of resistance and would either capitulate or accept 'mediation' without much ado. They were both wrong. They will no doubt do their utmost to make good the setback which Mussolini has suffered. It might be very awkward for them if the Greek example should stiffen the resistance of other Balkan countries, like Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, or should start a serious rebellion among the Albanians. King Zog, the exiled King of Albania, has, I hear, offered his services to the Greek Government.

Of the spirit of the Greek people an experienced British observer, who was in Athens when the Italian attack began and was in Crete by the time the British forces landed there, says that if determination, and hatred of the Italians, can influence the result of the war the Greeks will win. This does not surprise me. I had some personal experience of Greek detestation of Italian aims and methods in 1913, towards the end of the second Balkan war. The only question is how much help the Greeks can get against Italian and, perhaps, German forces which, on paper, are vastly superior and are certainly more fully equipped. Mr. Winston Churchill told the House of Commons last Tuesday that we shall do our best to give Greece all possible help. And if public feeling in Great Britain is any guide, our help, direct and indirect, will be considerable—as Italy is likely to find out.

Now that the Italians, besides attacking Greece, have been helping the Germans to bomb England, our people want to see Mussolini repaid with compound interest; and they welcome the opportunity which his attack on Greece has given us to make the repayment prompt and unstinting. So it will doubtless be—within the limits imposed by our obligations in Egypt and other parts of the Middle East. As Mr. Churchill said on Tuesday: 'Scores of thousands of troops have left this island month after month, or have been drawn from other parts of the Empire, for the Middle East,' and they have been equipped with 'precious weapons which

it was a wrench to take from our forces here.' The collapse of France last June had placed us in a very anxious position throughout the Mediterranean; and, until we had worsted Hitler in the Battle of Britain, many of our well-wishers, not only in the Middle East but throughout the world, may have thought that we were doomed. Even now we are not out of the wood. Mr. Churchill added, prudently: 'I can certainly not prophesy about battles which have yet to be fought, but I think that at the beginning of July, if we cast our minds back, we should have been very glad to be assured that on November 5 we should still be holding, in largely increased force, every position of any importance.'

The Battle of Britain may not yet be over, but its course hitherto has changed the outlook so decisively that Greece feels she can resist aggression with the certainty that her valour will not be fruitless or unaided, while the people of the United States have been emboldened to depart from a tradition of 150 years by electing as their President for a third term a statesman whom both Hitler and Mussolini abhor. If, as Mr. Churchill said, the failure of the enemy to invade England 'constitutes in itself one of the historic victories of the British Isles and is a monumental milestone on our onward march,' the courage of the United States electorate in ignoring a time-honoured tradition, so that there might be no misunderstanding of American policy, strikes me as a very notable victory for the forces of democratic freedom.

This does not mean that our people took sides in the American Presidential campaign. Public opinion in Great Britain resolutely refused to show preference for one candidate rather than the other. It was felt that the contest was the direct concern of the United States and of the United States alone. It was not doubted that Mr. Wendell Willkie, were he to be elected, would be as firm a supporter of the Allied cause as President Roosevelt had been. At the same time it was thought that the re-election of President Roosevelt would retain for the United States, and for the Allied cause, the advantage of leaving the conduct of United States policy in the hands of a Chief Executive whose responsible experience of international affairs no possible successor could speedily acquire. For this reason the result of the Presidential election has been as warmly welcomed in Great Britain as it has been coldly received in Berlin and Rome. But in Great Britain, at

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any rate, an equal welcome is extended to the behaviour of Mr. Wendell Willkie towards his successful rival, and to the swift appeal of Republican party leaders for national unity in support of the re-elected President. Such behaviour is looked upon as a sign of the political maturity which none but peoples expert in the practice of democratic freedom can attain.

As the war goes on, this matter of democratic freedom is coming more and more into the foreground. We are fighting to preserve it against totalitarian dictatorship and tyranny, but not many of us are able to say offhand what democratic freedom may be. We know what it is not. We are not quite sure what it is. So I was very pleased last Saturday when I read in one of our national newspapers the best definition I have yet seen of what may be called the way of life in freedom. Whoever wrote it may not have realized that he was doing something which the British Government has often been asked to do but has not yet done—that is to say, tell the world exactly what our war aims are. He was writing about the third centenary of the Long Parliament, which met at Westminster on November 3, 1640, and opened the floodgates of the English Revolution that lasted, off and on, forty-eight years. The Long Parliament itself was not finally dissolved for twenty years, and the English Revolution did not end until 1688 when it drove King James Stuart II from the throne and installed William of Orange, with his English wife, Mary, as the joint sovereigns of England. The earlier phases of the Revolution had been marked by the Parliamentary Wars and the long struggle between Cavaliers and Roundheads which culminated in the execution of Charles I and the establishment of the English Commonwealth with Cromwell as its Lord Protector. After Cromwell's death and the restoration of the Monarchy under Charles II, the fight went on between the authoritative conception of government, based on the Divine Right of Kings, and what is now called the democratic conception of the common law as the bulwark of the rights of the individual against the greed and the arrogance of power.

There was no final victory for either party in England during the seventeenth century; and it was not until King and Parliament alike had learned from adversity to understand one another better that the conflict resolved itself into

a lasting measure of practical agreement. What then emerged was worthy of the sacrifices that had been made, worthy to survive, as it has survived, in the way of life and the doctrine of freedom for and against which this war is being fought. And here is the definition of that doctrine in the newspaper I have mentioned. It runs:

'It is a doctrine that the interest of the commonwealth is greater than that of any part or class, and yet that no part may be neglected in the computation of the whole; that no man is too great to be subject to the law, and none too small to enjoy its protection; that all opinions are entitled to a hearing, but none may be imposed on the unwilling; that authority is the only safeguard of freedom, and the liberties of the subject the only abiding foundation on which authority can rest. In that faith the devotees of Charles and Cromwell, of Strafford and Pym, of Falkland and Hampden, may unite to give battle against a soul-destroying tyranny, which does equal violence to both the creeds for which these great leaders contended.'

I think that the passage I have quoted states our principal war aims in language both terse and apt. Yet a further question has arisen, and has been publicly discussed this week, about the way in which this war aim is to be fulfilled, in the international sphere, when we and our Allies have overthrown the soul-destroying tyranny of the dictators. Is there to be a revised and improved edition of the League of Nations to put an end to war and to foster international co-operation? Or must the breakdown of the old League of Nations be taken as a warning not to tread that path again? One of our leading newspapers argues that among the vital lessons which the British Commonwealth of Nations can teach the world is that there is no single formula of international order. Another lesson, it says, is the emptiness of merely formal commitments. It draws attention to the paradox that most of the nations which, at Geneva, were ready and eager to draw up and accept formal commitments, as a kind of constitutional covenant, have either gone down before the onrush of totalitarian dictatorship or have been unwilling to honour their engagements; whereas the British Commonwealth, which disliked formal commitments even among its own members, has got together spontaneously to fight for freedom and to save freedom for the world.

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All this is true. But I think we should be very careful not to draw the conclusion that the British habit and way of life can serve as a model even for other free peoples whose antecedents and traditions are different from ours; and there is a good deal of force in the plea put forward by a well-known student of world affairs that pending the development in the world of the habit of freedom 'a covenanted constitution may yet enable the new order (after the war) to preserve peace while the peoples are gradually acquiring the sense of common citizenship and the common loyalty which must eventually provide the solid basis of their (international) commonwealth.'

What has all this to do with the result of the Presidential election in the United States and with the progress of the war? I think it has a good deal to do with them. The outcome of the Presidential election is a triumph of sane democracy which does not abdicate the right of the people to have their say in the management of their affairs even in the midst of a world crisis. On the lowest level it is a fine advertisement for the principle of democratic freedom. On a higher level it shows that while one group of free nations is fighting to preserve freedom against armed dictatorship, another great community of free people has resolved to give all the help in its power to the first group whose cause it recognizes as its own. So, amid the bombings of London and the nightly air-raid warnings, those of us whom the guns keep awake are able to muse, hopefully and confidently, upon the better things and the better days that will assuredly come when, inspired by the doctrine of freedom, we shall not only have given battle against a soul-destroying tyranny but shall have swept it from the earth.

A NEW PHASE

By mid-November it was becoming clear that the war was entering a new phase, different from the three main phases that had marked its course since September 1939. The first phase consisted of the overthrow of Poland and of what was called the 'phony war' in the West. In the second phase, Holland, Belgium and France went down before Hitler; and the only big break in this 'catastrophe of disaster' was what Mr. Winston Churchill termed 'the miracle

of Dunkirk.' The third phase was the Battle of Britain. In it German raiders were brought down in a 'cataract' of loss and defeat while our bombers and our Navy wrecked Hitler's preparations to invade us.

In my talk on November 15 I said:

A new phase of the war seems to have begun, a phase in which, for the present at any rate, the enemy appears to be on the defensive against a run of very bad luck.

This change strikes me as important. Wars are not won by armed strength alone. They are also won, in part, by moral strength, and by the conviction of neutrals or non-belligerents that one side or the other is bound to come out on top. When the Battle of Britain began, most of the neutrals and non-belligerents believed that the British Commonwealth and its Allies would go under, that they could not withstand the Nazi-Fascist onslaught. By the beginning of October this belief had been shaken. Now, unless I am much mistaken, it has given place to a growing conviction that the British Commonwealth and its Allies cannot be beaten and are likely to win.

Little though I like to draw up catalogues, I think the list of episodes in the past ten days is worthy of attention. It records an almost uniform series of setbacks and disappointments for Hitler and Mussolini. First came the re-election of President Roosevelt for a third term. This dashed the hope of the dictators that there would be a period of confusion and uncertainty in the United States while executive power was being transferred from one President, and one great party, to another. Next in importance, for the German people, was the disturbance by British bombers of the arrangements for Hitler's annual beer cellar oration at Munich. This was more than a picturesque or an amusing incident. It showed the German people—and others—that the omnipotent and invincible Führer cannot now do as he likes, even in his own country. Other British bombers made things hot for the Italians at Naples, Bari, Brindisi, Vallona and Durazzo; and, for the Germans, at the Krupp works of Essen, at Danzig and elsewhere. Worse still was the total defeat of a picked division of the best Italian troops by the gallant Greeks, and the cutting up of several Italian battalions on other parts of the Albanian front. It was seen that the Greeks had foiled a

very dangerous Italian strategic plan, besides routing not merely Mussolini's Fascist militia but his famous Alpini and Bersaglieri.

But, it was whispered, these temporary Greek successes would count for little when Hitler's big army in Roumania should march through the Balkans, and draw upon Roumanian oil for their tanks, mechanized divisions and aircraft. The whispers died down as the rumblings of the great earthquake in Roumania began to reverberate through Europe. In the Balkans, people remembered that Hitler has often claimed Providence as his ally—much as the former German Emperor William II, used to do—and wondered whether Providence really stands behind the Rome-Berlin Axis. While they were wondering, the British Fleet Air Arm cleared up a mystery of a different sort—the mystery of the Italian battle fleet and of its whereabouts.

Ever since British forces landed in Crete, more than a fortnight ago, I have been waiting for news from Taranto, the great Italian naval harbour inside the heel of the Italian peninsula. Naples might be important as an Italian naval base, but Taranto was twice as important. The first news came in an Italian *communiqué* which announced that an Italian warship had been damaged by British aircraft at Taranto. Then, forty-eight hours later, came the British announcement, based on photographic proof, that our Fleet Air Arm, in one daring swoop, had put out of action half of Mussolini's battle fleet of six battleships, besides crippling two cruisers and two auxiliary ships. The Prime Minister might well call this mighty deed 'a glorious episode.' For Mussolini's skulking monsters it was anything but glorious, just about as glorious, in fact, as the fate of the Italian aircraft which tried to bomb London last Sunday. Thirteen of them were shot down by our airmen in as many minutes, without the loss of a single British machine. The others turned tail and fled.

The Italians, who are a superstitious people, may well see an omen in the crippling of one of their finest modern battleships of the 'Littorio' class. The name 'Littorio' is a Fascist invention. It is derived from the Italian form of the Latin word 'lictor,' the name borne by the Roman officers whose functions were to bear a bundle, or 'fasces,' of rods, with an axe in the middle, before magistrates. The rods were for

beating, and the axe for beheading, condemned culprits. The name 'Fascist' is taken from this 'fasces,' or bundle of rods, as the adjective 'littorio' is from the lictors who bore and used them. Mussolini made the word 'littorio' the symbol of his whole Fascist system of rod and axe, a system of terror and killing. And now one of his great battleships of the 'Littorio' class, a class that has never yet dared to exchange even a shot with a British cruiser, lies crippled and half-submerged in Taranto harbour, as a symbol of the approaching end of Fascism itself.

For the British and Allied cause this is more than a symbol. It alters in our favour the whole naval balance of power in the Mediterranean, and affects it elsewhere. At a moment when our naval strength was most heavily taxed, the Fleet Air Arm has given it relief so great that the situation has been turned to our advantage. Upon the French at Vichy and in North Africa the lesson will not be lost, nor will the Spaniards at Tangier be blind to its significance. Germany will learn of it with gnashing of teeth, for Hitler was reckoning upon the Italian navy in his plans to break British sea power and to destroy our seaborne supplies. Before very long, I trust, his Atlantic raider, sent out to prey upon our convoys, will have joined the *Graf Spee* at the bottom of the sea. But whether it be caught soon or late, it has added another chapter of imperishable fame to the annals of the British Navy. Like Captain Kennedy of the merchant cruiser *Rawalpindi* a year ago, Captain Fogarty Fegen, of the merchant cruiser *Jervis Bay*, faced unflinchingly overwhelming odds and certain death by courting battle with a powerful German warship; and by his gallantry Captain Fogarty Fegen, his officers and ship's company, saved all but a few of the thirty-eight vessels in the convoy they were escorting. His men, most of whom belonged to the merchant service, fought like veterans; and so impressed by their courage was the captain of a Swedish freighter that he, too, braved German gunfire and returned to the scene of action in order to rescue survivors. It is a noble story of the sea.

Alongside of such deeds as these the confabulations in Berlin between the Soviet representative, Molotov, and Hitler, Goering, Hess and Ribbentrop appear very prosaic. What they may mean or portend we do not know; and where some basis of positive knowledge is lacking, guesswork is

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idle. The one thing certain is that Hitler needs something to show his people, something, too, that may help to offset the serious damage German industries have suffered from British bombers. Hence, perhaps, the summoning of German industrialists to meet Molotov. Hitherto the Russians have driven a pretty hard bargain for the help they have given to Germany. Now that Hitler needs their goodwill more than they need his—at any rate for the moment—I doubt whether their terms will be less exacting. The sequel may answer the question as to how much was real business and how much window-dressing in the Molotov visit. I should be surprised if Russia were found to have entered the Berlin-Rome-Tokio combination.

Nowhere will the Russo-German negotiations have been more eagerly watched than in the occupied but unsubdued territories of Poland and Czechoslovakia. In Poland the Germans have recently increased the brutal severity of their oppression because—as one German authority recently confessed—the Poles will not give up the idea that Germany is going to lose the war. The Polish and Czechoslovak Governments in London are at one in this belief with their peoples under the German heel. And even if Soviet Russia should have felt tempted to lend an ear to Hitler's blandishments, Mr. Molotov can hardly have ignored the news of the 'glorious episode' of Taranto which came while he was in Berlin, or the fact that the British air-raid on Berlin last Wednesday night prevented him from leaving the Soviet Embassy before 2 a.m. on Thursday morning. However this may be, it will lie with the British Commonwealth and its Allies to mould the future of Europe.

CHAPTER NINE

THE SHIFT TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

Mid-November to December 1940

As the month of November wore on it became clear that—apart from the unceasing battle of the Atlantic, German air-raids on British cities, and British air-raids on Germany—the struggle was gradually shifting towards the south-east, with mastery over the Mediterranean as its immediate objective. By this time Hitler had understood that it was beyond his power to break British resistance either by air attack, invasion or submarine blockade. He had to recast both his political and his military strategy. Even in the eyes of countries he had subdued he had suffered his first resounding defeat; and the ignominious failure of Mussolini to break Greek resistance detracted still further from the prestige of the two Dictators. Therefore Hitler bestirred himself to bolster up his waning credit by organizing a procession of satellites and minor notables to his headquarters in Berlin or at Berchtesgaden.

In my talk on November 22 I said:

In a way and up to a point, though only up to a point, this has been Hitler's week. He has kept himself well on view in the front of the stage. Somebody—perhaps Goebbels—may have told him that it was a little undignified on his part, and not very impressive, to rush round Europe as he did three weeks ago in order to meet Laval in Paris, General Franco on the Spanish frontier, Marshal Pétain somewhere in France, and Mussolini at Florence. Surely, a triumphant Dictator, master of a continent and author of a Grand Design for a

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New European Order, had better stay at home and bid others come to him! So this week we have seen a procession of minor notables wait on Hitler in Berlin and at Berchtesgaden. The Russian Prime Minister, Molotov, had hardly left the German capital (with the sound of British bombs in his ears), when Señor Suñer, the Spanish Foreign Minister; Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law and Foreign Secretary; and King Boris of Bulgaria hastened to sit at the Führer's feet. General Antonescu, Prime Minister and 'Conducator' of Roumania which has now become Hitler's vassal, may soon 'bring up the rear.' Hitler himself has varied the proceedings by turning up suddenly in Vienna to meet the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary of Hungary, after they had 'signed on' for their country as a member of the Berlin-Rome-Tokio Axis and a supporter of Hitler's Grand Design.

According to Ribbentrop this is 'only a beginning.' All the other smaller European States are to be invited likewise to 'sign on.' 'I am firmly convinced,' said Ribbentrop after Hungary had signed in Vienna, 'that the armed forces of the allied States and the weight of this alliance will contribute to the restoration of peace in a not too remote future.'

We seem to have heard something like this before. Didn't Hitler say in 1936, after he had occupied the demilitarized Rhineland, that this would be peace and that he had no further demands to make on France? Didn't he say in February 1938 that his annexation of Austria had fulfilled all his ambitions and that he had no more territorial designs? Were not the British and French statesmen who signed the Munich Agreement with him in September 1938 solemnly assured that he wanted only 'self-determination' for the Sudeten Germans of Czechoslovakia, and would on no account have any Czechs or other non-Germans within the frontiers of his pure-blooded Germanic Third Reich? Didn't he then destroy and annex Czechoslovakia, take Danzig and split up Poland between himself and Russia? So now when he, or Ribbentrop for him, talks of the restoration of peace in a not too remote future—on the understanding that he is to have the whole of Europe—even my trustful nature cannot suppress a twinge of doubt. Is it not possible that 'Europe' might include the French, Belgian, Dutch, Portuguese and former German colonies? Or then, with all these territories at his command, just a little more?

I cannot claim to be in Hitler's confidence, though I can claim some knowledge of his methods and of the workings of his mind. Even were I in his confidence I sorely fear that I shouldn't feel much confidence in him; and I am not certain that all the people who have 'signed on,' or others who may be induced to sign, have much more confidence in him than I should have. Indeed, I fancy that it is precisely this question of confidence which has made him bid all these people to come to him. I think he wanted to restore their faith in his irresistible invincibility after the shocks they had received from his failure to invade England, from the Presidential election in the United States, from the destructive British bombings of German war factories and harbours, from Greek resistance to Italy and from the smashing of Italian warships at Taranto. I feel certain that the heavy German raids this week on Coventry and other British industrial centres were intended to impress his visitors by making them believe that Hitler can and will cripple our war effort. In this he has not succeeded and will not succeed, but he hopes to give the impression that he can do so while his plans for the domination of South-Eastern Europe are being matured as a step towards the unification of Europe in accordance with his Grand Design.

If I read his mind rightly he will launch the Grand Design in the form of a 'peace offensive.' He meant to start this offensive just before the Presidential election in the United States, but he couldn't quite manage it in time. Hitler has often said that one of his favourite occupations is to read history. This may or may not be true. There is good evidence that his favourite reading consists of 'shockers' of the baser sort. But if he has ever read history it is not hard to see where he got the idea of a Grand Design. It is at least as old as Henry IV of France, one of the most notable of French kings, who reigned from 1589 to 1610. Henry IV was a great monarch who was fortunate enough to be helped by a still greater Minister, the Duke of Sully, with whom Henry worked out a Grand Design for the co-ordination of Europe and the maintenance of peace. Together they proposed to set up a supreme European Council to maintain the principle that right comes before might. All was ready for the launching of this Grand Design when Henry IV was assassinated by a fanatic named Ravallac. After his Sovereign's death, the

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Duke of Sully published details of the Grand Design which showed that the fifteen States of a new Europe were to be represented proportionately in a Supreme Council or Senate, and that this body, in addition to settling disputes between its members by peaceful means, and controlling the combined forces of the fifteen States, would keep an eye on the domestic affairs of all its members. The fifteen countries, which included England as well as France and Germany, together with Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Bohemia and Hungary, were to contribute armed contingents to a general European police force numbering 100,000 infantry, 25,000 cavalry and 120 guns. As one of Henry's biographers wrote, Henry had 'enlisted all the good writers in Christendom on his side: For indeed he would have chosen rather to persuade than to force people, and to instruct them so well in his intentions that they should regard his arms as forces held in reserve, to be used only as a last resort.'

If Hitler has ever heard of this truly Grand Design he failed to understand, or rejected, two of its most important features. The first was its principle that right goes before might; and the second was that force should only be used in the last resort on behalf of right and law. Hitler preferred the Prussian principle that might is right, and his own loudly proclaimed doctrine that everything must be done 'with fanatical brutality' in order to attain German mastery over the world.

The people of his latest accomplice, Hungary, whom their leaders have now led into bondage, can hardly fail to reflect how sadly their present leaders fall short of their great leaders in the past. In Budapest there is a public place or square known as the *Eskü-tér*, or 'Place of the Oath.' It was here that the Magyars swore in 1848 no longer to be bondsmen of the Austrian-German Hapsburgs, but to fight for independence and freedom—in the spirit of the impassioned lines of their great poet, Petöfi:

By the Magyar God we swear it
Yea, we swear it, o'er and o'er,
Bondsmen henceforth nevermore.

Or, in their own language:

A Magyarok Istenere
Esküszünk, Esküszünk
Hogy rabok tovább
Nem leszünk!

The oath is now repudiated, for the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary of Hungary have handed her over to a far more tyrannical Austrian-German than any Hapsburg—and have seen, as their immediate reward, the Hungarian currency depreciated in terms of the German mark!

From the standpoint of the general European outlook it may seem to matter little that Hungary should have thrown in her lot with the Axis, though it may matter much to some of Hungary's neighbours like Yugoslavia. I doubt whether Hitler expects his Grand Design or his peace offensive to succeed in any near future. The mishaps of Italy in the war against Greece may compel him to undertake a campaign in the Balkans, if not in the Middle East, before very long. He may think it a good tactical move to make a peace offer, so as to throw all the blame for its rejection on to Great Britain. Mussolini has already made a move in this direction in a speech delivered to the Fascist Party last Monday. In it Mussolini said: 'I solemnly affirm, without any fear of being contradicted today or at any other time, that the responsibility for the war falls exclusively on Great Britain.' Had Great Britain accepted Hitler's offers, Mussolini argued, there would have been peace.

In saying this Mussolini was 'playing up' to Hitler, and appealing to him not to leave Italy in the lurch. Hitler, for his part, despises Mussolini but cannot afford to wash his hands of him. Though he may not have been sorry to see Mussolini get a smack, or several smacks, in the eye, he can hardly have wished him to get so black an eye as Mussolini has got from the Greeks at Koritza. Mussolini has annoyed Hitler by insisting on Italian territorial claims against France at the very moment when Hitler was trying to bring Marshal Pétain and the Vichy Government into line with the German 'New Order' in Europe. So, if Hitler has to try to rescue Mussolini from the Greeks, whom Great Britain is supporting, Italy will have to open her mouth, shut her eyes, and gratefully accept whatever territorial crumbs Hitler may be graciously pleased to send her. Then it would be easier for

Hitler to make the Men of Vichy toe the line. Meanwhile, by way of a hint to the Men of Vichy that they must not presume upon Hitler's goodwill, he has expelled many thousands of Frenchmen and their families from Lorraine. He thinks, doubtless, that a crack of his whip, or an unkind cut from its lash, will help the Men of Vichy to remember who is their master.

All in all Hitler has not, as yet, a very docile team to drive. He will have understood that Mussolini's speech to the Fascist Party was the speech of a frightened man, and that its denunciation of the pacifist spirit—as something which the Fascist Party must fight—would hardly have been needed if the heart of the Italian people were in the war. Yet for Hitler the question is how best to help Mussolini. To send German troops by sea is out of the question; and even if German divisions should be allowed to march unhindered through Bulgaria on their way to attack Greece, would Turkey remain passive? Has Russia agreed to put pressure on the Turks so as to keep them from moving? We do not yet know, and it is not certain that Hitler knows. If Turkey stands firm, the example of Greece may inspire the Yugoslavs to resist—and the Yugoslavs in their own mountains are formidable fighters.

To some of these questions the near future may supply an answer; and the answer may depend in large measure upon the belief of the threatened countries in the power of Great Britain to overcome Hitler. While Britain remains not only unsubdued but able to repay Germany with interest for every air-raid on England, faith in Hitler's invincibility will not be robust. Even while he prepares his peace offensive and pursues his Grand Design, Hitler knows that he is being forced on to the defensive.

Meanwhile in Britain we hold on, hit back and gather strength for the days of reckoning that will begin to dawn in 1941. If we have not yet drawn up or put forward our Grand Design, it is because we are fighting, not talking, for the freedom of Europe and of a great part of the world. First things must come first. We had rather be better than our word than fail to fulfil promises and undertakings. But our Design is growing in our minds and hearts; and, like that of Henry IV of France and the Duke of Sully, it will be inspired by the two principles that right goes before might, and that

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the proper function of force is to be used, as a last resort, as the servant of law and for the suppression of the scourge of war.

'MUSSOLINI'S WEEK'

Spectacular defeats inflicted by the Greeks on Mussolini's forces were the outstanding feature of the last week in November. Though it had been hoped that Greece might be able to hold her own against the Italian invaders it had not been expected that she would beat them handsomely in every encounter, and chase them through the Albanian mountains almost back to the sea. Admiration for Greek gallantry spread throughout the world—and corresponding contempt for Mussolini and his 'Blackshirts.' My talk on November 29 therefore ran:

If, up to a point, last week was Hitler's week, Mussolini can only claim, in a very negative way, that this week has been his week. It has been the week of the Greeks and, to some extent, the week of the British airmen who have given the Greeks useful help. What may happen before the end of the year nobody can tell. The position, both as regards its background and its foreground, is too complicated to warrant any definite forecast. But I have been trying to map out in my own mind its main lines, so as to form a reasonable estimate of the facts and the prospects.

Greece has covered herself with glory. Mr. Winston Churchill's message to her Prime Minister, General Metaxas, after the capture of Koritza, said what we feel: 'We are all inspired by this feat of Greek valour against an enemy so superior in numbers and equipment. This recalls the classic age.' Nor is the inspiration limited to the British Commonwealth and its Allies. It has spread like wildfire through the Balkans and the Middle East. It has stirred the French to the depths of their bewildered souls and has awakened in them some bitter reflections. What Hitler may be thinking we cannot judge. The only outward sign is that talk of his New Order in Europe has been suspended, and that after the roping in of Roumania and Slovakia the list of candidates for inclusion in his Grand Design has been closed, at least temporarily. Bulgaria is not to join the Axis just yet, her

Ministers are not to visit Berlin, the Yugoslavs are breathing more freely, and in many places many people are wondering what Hitler will do next.

Before I deal with Hitler and his worries I should like to say a word about France and the Vichy Government. In more ways than one, France is the key to the Italian invasion of Greece and its remarkable consequences. According to trustworthy information that has reached General de Gaulle something like a crisis has been and is going on within the Vichy Government. Laval—the French Quisling and Marshal Pétain's deputy—went to meet Hitler in Paris more than a month ago without the knowledge of Marshal Pétain or his other colleagues. On his return to Vichy, Laval nearly succeeded in persuading Marshal Pétain to accept Hitler's terms. The terms proposed were that France should not give up much European territory to Germany except Alsace-Lorraine on the east and French Flanders in the north; and that the only non-European territory to be handed over would be the port of Jibuti in the Gulf of Aden whence a French railway runs to Abyssinia. Jibuti was to be given to Italy. Proposals for the gradual release of French prisoners of war, and for the participation of Germany in all big French banks and industrial undertakings, were crowned by the suggestion that while the French Fleet would not be given up to Germany, German vessels should have the right to use all French ports in Europe and overseas as bases of supply.

Though not unwilling to accept these terms, Marshal Pétain felt they must be submitted to his Cabinet. One of his Ministers, General Huntziger, an Alsatian, objected to them. He pointed out that even if Hitler's terms might seem comparatively moderate in terms of territory, the object of the proposal that German ships should use all French ports was to compel the British to attack French ports and to drag France into war against Great Britain. Laval and Admiral Darlan, who are accomplices of Hitler, were so angry with General Huntziger that they almost came to blows with him; but after three violent Cabinet meetings the majority supported Huntziger. Consequently Marshal Pétain could only declare, on October 30, that he accepted economic co-operation with Germany. He tacitly rejected the other terms. French public opinion, which did not know what had gone on, took Pétain's statement as a fresh act of capitulation to

Hitler, and grew angry. Then Hitler took his revenge by expelling the French inhabitants from Lorraine.

Meanwhile Mussolini heard that his part of French booty was to be limited—forgive me for what sounds like a horrible pun—to Jibuti, and that neither Nice nor Corsica nor Tunis was to become Italian. So he decided to take something for himself, and ordered the attack upon Greece in the early hours of the day when he was to meet Hitler at Florence. Matters were made worse by the publication of official statements at Vichy and Berlin that Italy had abandoned her territorial claims, and by an equally official statement at Rome that Italy had abandoned nothing.

If Greece had yielded, Mussolini might have felt that the laugh was on his side. Greece withstood him—and there was no doubt a grim smile at Vichy. What sort of smile spread over Hitler's august countenance we can only guess. I should fancy that it was indistinguishable from a very wry grimace.

General de Gaulle, the leader of Free France, who has now returned from West Africa to London, lost no time in telling French people by wireless what he thought. 'The terrible logic of war' he began, 'is dispelling the mists spread by the enemy, and his agents at Vichy, to cloud the vision of France. . . . While the Italian Fascist army shows its impotence on the frontier of Egypt and in Abyssinia, while our British Allies destroy at Taranto Mussolini's battleships, while the Italian troops are retreating all along the line before our valiant Greek allies, the French begin to understand, not without rage, that their arms have been deprived of the glorious and decisive part they might have played. The French begin to understand, not without anger, what our Fleet, our troops, our Air Force in Africa, Syria and throughout the French Empire might have done; for these forces, intact on the day of the armistice, have been disarmed, handed over or dispersed by treason. . . . French anger is creating day by day an atmosphere of exile, of fright and of menace around the invaders and their accomplices of Vichy. . . . It is this French fury, the fury of Joan of Arc, of Danton and of Clémenceau, that rekindles our hope and arms us anew. Let us cherish this sacred rage to hasten the day when force will do justice both to our foes and to their friends at Vichy.'

The 'sacred fury' of which General de Gaulle spoke is

waxing hot in France. Elsewhere, and especially in the Balkans and the Middle East, the feelings aroused by the Greek victories are different. In modern times none of the Balkan or Middle Eastern peoples—each of whom has its own special quality of pride—has looked up to the Greeks as its superior in military valour. Now these peoples are inclined to feel that what the Greeks can do they also could do, and that it is better to stand up to an invader than to bow down before him. As for Italy, whose people have long affected to despise the Greeks, her humiliation, or—to use a word that is stronger in Italian than it is in English—her mortification, is extreme. One question is how the Italians will react to the reverses they have suffered. Will they pull themselves together and make a desperate effort to wipe out the recent record of disaster, or will they turn against their infallible Duce and his advisers who have allowed the Greeks to inflict so deep a wound on Italian national vanity? If Greece alone were involved, I should expect the Italians to rally against her. But behind Greece stands Great Britain; and even Mussolini has not been able to hide from his people the devastating work done by the British Fleet Air Arm at Taranto and by the Royal Air Force elsewhere. I can think of only one motive that would induce the Italians to grant Mussolini extenuating circumstances. This motive would be a suspicion that Hitler was trying to defraud Italy of her part of the spoils of France, and was, albeit for his own reasons, ‘playing up to’ the French enemy rather than to his Italian ally.

It was a motive of this kind which the pre-Fascist Italian Governments used at the end of the last war—in which Italy was among the victors—to foster a mood of disappointment and defeatism because Italy did not get all the territory which she had demanded (against her own true interests) as the price of her entry into that war. Presently the mood of disappointment and defeatism changed into one of extreme nationalism of which Mussolini and his Fascists became the exponents; and when Hitler, in his turn, whipped up a similar mood of extreme nationalism or racialism in Germany, as the basis of Nazism, it was natural that Italian Fascism and German Nazism should get together in the hope of plundering Europe. Their alliance was, however, governed by the unwritten law that there must be honour

among thieves. Otherwise, if one gangster suspects that a confederate has swindled him, the thieves are apt to fall out.

What Hitler may feel about Mussolini I cannot pretend to know. If the Vichy Government had 'played up,' Hitler might have snapped his fingers at Italy. But even Vichy has put a spoke in Hitler's wheel. Besides, the main support of Hitler's 'New Order' is the Berlin-Rome Axis. What becomes of the New Order if one end of the Axis breaks down? Hitler may feel that Mussolini has got things into a mess. But can he afford to leave him altogether in the lurch? To help Italy against Greece a winter campaign in the Balkans might be necessary—and there are pleasanter places than the Balkans for campaigning in winter. So, if Mussolini can manage to hang on in some part of Albania until next April or May, Hitler might prefer to wait. Yet the further question arises whether he can afford to wait while the British aircraft and navy continue to make things uncomfortable in Italy.

Nobody can answer these questions offhand. It would be folly to assume that they will be answered altogether in our favour. Great Britain and the British Commonwealth are bearing, almost alone, the military, economic and financial burden of the war. The material and moral help of the United States is of inestimable value. It is being given, and we are not the less grateful for it on this account, because the United States feels that we are fighting its own battle, that we hold the front line, and deserve support. What the people of the United States may not realize, or not realize quite so fully as we realize it, is that circumstances now render our task much harder than it was in 1917 and 1918 during the last war. Then we had the French, Italian, Japanese and American navies and merchant shipping on our side. We controlled all the Irish harbours. Germany controlled only her own and the Belgian coasts. Now she controls all the coasts from the north of Norway down to the Spanish frontier. Our naval and shipping problems are thus rendered far more arduous. Hitler knows this, and is trying to take advantage of our difficulties. He is also making desperate though, fortunately, not very successful attempts to cripple our industrial centres by night bombing. His propaganda multiplies a hundredfold whatever damage he is able to do, and seeks to hide the far heavier damage we do to him.

But if he could see, as I have seen this week, the spirit of our people in some of the provincial cities that have been hardest hit, he would pull as wry a face as the Greek victories over Mussolini have probably made him pull. I could not have believed, had I not experienced it, that the spirit of comradeship among all classes of our people would be so frank, so solid, so uncomplaining as it is, and so determined to win this battle of mankind, for mankind as much as for themselves. And I feel sure that when the people of the United States come fully to understand how we are fighting their battle, and how we are winning it despite every difficulty and handicap, they will find ways and means of overcoming whatever formal obstacles may still stand in the way of their giving us, short of war, every kind of help that it may be in their power to give.

MUSSOLINI RETREATS

At the beginning of December Mussolini could no longer hide the—for him—sad fact that his troops were retreating before the Greeks. Things were obviously working up to a point at which Hitler would be obliged to do something in order to rescue his Italian partner. On December 6 I discussed the outlook and attributed his furious bombing of Coventry, Birmingham, Bristol, Southampton and other British cities as an effort to hearten his accomplices. The talk ran:

There have been two noteworthy comments on the situation this week. The first came from Mussolini. According to the Rome radio he said to his Cabinet: 'Italian forces have retreated a few miles in Albanian territory on account of bad weather. Italy was not ready for this war, as we wanted only to occupy certain Greek points in a friendly way. Neither Greeks nor British will force Italians to leave Albania. Soon the aspect of this war will change.'

'Bad weather' is the most humorous explanation of Greek victories I have yet seen. It was all the more humorous for being unconscious. I wonder what Mussolini's Cabinet thought of it—or, for that matter, Marshal Badoglio, the Italian Chief of General Staff, who has just resigned. Badoglio is an able soldier. I saw something of him on the

Italian front in 1918. But I should like to know whether he has been made a scapegoat or whether he has taken cover until the weather improves from the Italian, though not necessarily from Mussolini's, point of view. He has never been among Mussolini's close friends.

The other comment came from Turkey. Alluding to Hitler's indiscriminate bombing of British cities it described his behaviour as that of a man 'insane with fury.' There can be no doubt of Hitler's fury. How sane or insane it may be is a matter for argument.

If the two comments—the Italian and the Turkish—be taken together they suggest what is probably the right interpretation of current events. Italy was certainly not prepared for such a war as her attack upon Greece has got her into. As I said last week, Mussolini hoped to steal a march on Hitler by getting hold of Greece at a moment when Hitler was trying to link up with the Vichy Government of unoccupied France by ignoring Mussolini's claims to a big share of French territory. If Mussolini could have got control of the Greek 'strategic points,' as his sudden ultimatum demanded, he might have been able to play first fiddle in the concert which he and Hitler proposed to give, at British expense, in the Eastern Mediterranean and Northern Africa. Then he would have been better placed to insist on getting his share of French booty. 'Bad weather,' and some other things, including the epic valour of the Greek army, upset his calculations. Now the question arises whether he can make good his boast that neither the Greeks nor the British will force the Italians to leave Albania. It almost looks as though the Italians might need something more than good weather if they are to hold on.

Meanwhile Mussolini's blunder threw Hitler into a fury. He might not have been displeased to see his partner in the Berlin-Rome Axis suitably chastened for impertinence, but he cannot have been pleased at the thought that Greek victories, and the achievements of British aircraft, would stiffen resistance to the Axis everywhere, even within the Vichy Government. Equally displeasing must have been the thought that he could only help Mussolini directly by launching a Balkan campaign in mid-winter at the risk of adding Turkey or Yugoslavia, or both, to his enemies. In his fury he may well have cast about for some means of giving in-

direct help to Mussolini while improving Germany's own position.

It is a mistake, I think, to underrate Hitler's foresight, even when he is most furious. What actually passes in his mind he alone knows. But the language of the German press often gives a clue to what Dr. Goebbels believes Hitler to be thinking. Now the German press has of late been turning its most violent abuse against England and has announced her utter destruction by submarine blockade, aerial bombardment and, presently, by invasion. In Nazi meetings Dr. Goebbels's spokesmen have been declaring that England will be made to pay for everything with everything she possesses 'down to the last wedding-ring of the last British wife.' This may be madness. Yet I fancy that there is a method in it.

If I try to put myself into Hitler's place, and to reason in the way that much reading of his book and hearing of his speeches make me think he would reason, the result is roughly as follows: 'The final outcome of the battle of Greece depends upon the Battle of Britain. When I, Adolf Hitler, have beaten the British I can manage the Greeks, with or without Mussolini. So I shall let him stew in his own juice for a while and shall show him how to deal with a stubborn enemy. One after the other I shall destroy the principal British centres of population with their war industries. At the same time scores of my submarines will sink enough British vessels to starve out the British Isles. When weather and other conditions permit, I shall let England know what invasion means. Until I have done this it is not much good bothering about Mussolini. If I wait too long, who knows whether the French will be quite so submissive as they now are? The Norwegians are already troublesome. The Dutch are very obstinate. Even in Roumania things are not yet in order. All this will change when I have smashed the British. Let them look out for themselves.'

From Hitler's standpoint this seems to me sound reasoning. Only it comes a little late. A shrewd Austrian, of military experience, said to me the other day: 'Napoleon's Hundred Days led him to Waterloo. England caused his fall. The Hundred Days that Hitler wasted after the fall of Paris last June made England the most formidable fortress in the world, bristling with arms, unconquerable, defended by

millions of grim, determined, bulldog fighters and guarded by thousands of the best airmen from all over the world—inhabited, too, by a people who defy death and destruction. In the hard days of June, the fatal days of France, Mr. Churchill said: "Give me a Hundred Days"—and Hitler gave them to him.'

If this Austrian estimate of Hitler's position is anywhere near the truth, Hitler is now trying to make up for lost time. He has been bombing our cities indiscriminately—Coventry, Birmingham, Bristol, Southampton. His U-boats and surface raiders have been hitting hard at our seaborne convoys of food, raw materials and other supplies. The Admiralty publishes the figures of our losses in tonnage week by week. They are not nearly as catastrophic as they were in the black days of 1917, during the last war, but they are not negligible. I wish, however, that the Admiralty or the Ministry of Supply would publish, week by week, the figures of the tonnage that does reach our shores uninterruptedly. They would open a good many eyes, including those of Hitler, upon the likelihood of starving us out. In comparison with these figures, the figures of our losses would seem almost negligible. And now that the Prime Minister himself has taken charge of our campaign against Hitler's U-boats we may expect to hear that Hitler is by no means having things all his own way.

Then there are the nightly raids of Royal Air Force bombers upon Hitler's submarine yards and bases in Germany and France, the burning of his oil refineries and storage tanks, the smashing of his blast furnaces, the unremitting attention that is being paid to his supply ships, and to what are called his 'invasion ports.' Whether his fury be sane or insane, it is unlikely to be decreased by these things. He may try, no doubt he will try, to push the Battle of Britain to a climax before the winter is over. In desperation he may resort to methods more devilish than any he has yet adopted. Yet I think he will find that we shall meet climax with climax and shall end by out-climaxing him.

Often in these days or, rather, in the long black nights of strain and stress, one has occasion to reflect upon the sources of our strength and of our undiminished confidence. Somebody who, if he said it, ought to have known better than to say it, is alleged to have said that democracy is dead in Great

Britain. Anybody who really knows our people knows that this is nonsense. There might be some truth in it if we were quietly and passively waiting for our Government to tell us what to do, and if we were then to do it like a half-frightened flock of sheep. But we still have a free press and a free House of Commons. Both of them back up the Government, as we all do, when we think the Government is right and is doing its best. But both of them criticize the Government, as we all do, when we wonder whether this Minister or that could not do better. Some who used to mock at Parliament, to call it a 'talking shop,' are now thankful that we have a Parliament to tell the Government what the people are thinking and feeling. We know that our present House of Commons is hardly first-rate. It was elected five years ago in order to support a policy which it did not support, and to look after our national security which it did not look after. Yet even this House of Commons now reflects the spirit of the people. It insists on debating, in public and in secret, questions of policy, questions of method, and it does not hesitate to speak its mind. And the Government, for its part, takes Parliamentary criticism in such a way that the House of Commons often seems to transform itself into a Council of State in which majority and minority alike have only one end in view—the winning of the war for our own freedom and that of others. This is democracy. This is responsible freedom in action.

Upon one important matter there has been, there still is, some divergence of opinion. It is upon the question: How best to win the peace? Hitherto the Government has spoken in generalities. It has been rather shy of saying what shall be done with victory before victory has been won. Some of its supporters claim that the first thing is to win the war, and that there will be time to think about the peace when the war is won. Others say that if foreign countries—not excluding even the Germans and the Italians—are told what our policy will be, what we are fighting for, they will see a hopeful alternative to Nazi and Fascist oppression and will like that oppression less and less.

There is a good deal to be said on both sides, and still more for discussing the issue frankly. Discussion and criticism are essential to political freedom. They are the hallmark of democracy. The overwhelming majority which rejected last

Thursday an extremist suggestion that the British Prime Minister should answer Hitler's speeches in order to seek some ground for agreement, was truly representative of public feeling; and it is certainly a proof of the strength of British democracy that such a debate could be held publicly in war-time. We are so sure of our position, and of the indisputable righteousness of our cause, that we can well afford to tolerate the expression of any opinion.

Nor is confidence felt by ourselves alone. The financial and commercial agreement reached this week between Great Britain and Turkey is a further proof, if proof were needed, that other countries share our belief. Turkey has stood firm through good report and ill. She has resisted all the blandishments of Hitler's ambassador, the arch-intriguer von Papen, who tried to play upon the fact that fifty per cent of Turkey's trade has in recent years been done with Germany, and argued that Turkey could not afford to estrange so good a customer for her agricultural produce. Even Soviet Russia has declined German requests that she should put pressure on Turkey in order to make the Turkish Government more amenable to German arguments. Now Turkey has again shown her confidence in a British and Allied victory by entering into an agreement of which the effect will be to switch over to Great Britain and the British Commonwealth a large proportion of the trade hitherto done with Germany. Great Britain will buy Turkish agricultural produce, and in return Great Britain and the members of the British Commonwealth will sell to Turkey not only the machines and other heavy goods which she requires but cotton, wool and other commodities needed by the Turkish peasant producers. This trade will run into many millions of pounds a year, and it will be based not upon barter but upon the existing rate of exchange between the Turkish pound and the pound sterling.

The secret of this agreement lies in the fact that Germany habitually uses trade agreements as a means of political domination and blackmail, whereas Great Britain regards them as arrangements for fair give and take on a basis of freedom and equality. Apart from moral and political considerations, this is the essential difference between Hitler's boasted 'New Order' in Europe and the order that will be founded upon the victory of the forces of freedom.

THE SHIFT TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

EGYPT: BRITAIN HITS BACK

In the second week of December a British offensive in the Egyptian western desert added to the vexations of Mussolini. While the Greek offensive continued successfully on the whole front, British headquarters at Cairo reported that operations were progressing favourably in the western desert and that large numbers of Italian prisoners had been taken. By December 13 the remnants of the retreating Italian army were hastily withdrawing to the Egyptian frontier, leaving behind them several thousand more Italian prisoners. In my talk that day I said:

Several things have happened this week. Most of them are really important. We, who are in the front line—for the Battle of Britain is still going on—may not be able accurately to judge the relative importance of events; but I agree with the Turkish estimate that the British and Allied attack upon Italian positions in Egypt is the most significant event of the week. By this I do not mean that the wonderful succession of Greek victories in Albania ought to rank second as a military achievement. I mean that what soldiers call 'the initiative' has been lost by Mussolini and gained by Great Britain.

The Italian armies in Libya and Egypt are no longer in a position to take the offensive and to impose defensive strategy and tactics upon the British Commanders in North Africa. The moral, political and military effects of this change cannot yet be fully foreseen, but in view of the success of the British attack they are likely to be very considerable. It is one thing to attack bravely in what soldiers call a defensive-offensive. It is quite another thing to take the offensive, to capture large numbers of enemy prisoners and so to break up arrangements as to change enemy plans. This is what the British Commander in Egypt, General Sir Archibald Wavell, appears to have done.

If we look back a month or two the meaning of this event will be clearer. At the end of September, when it became plain that Hitler was not winning the Battle of Britain and that his chances of invading England were small, it was generally believed that the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa would be the main theatre of war during the winter. The Italians had already begun their advance towards Egypt

but had stuck fast at Sidi Barrani. French Syria had obeyed the orders of the Vichy Government and looked like becoming a thorn in our side. An Italian commission had gone there in the hope of making the thorn as sharp as possible. Hitler was pouring troops into Roumania, both with the object of getting control of Roumanian oil and of preparing for an advance to the south, probably through Bulgaria, to the shores of the Aegean Sea. Italy, whose fleet was almost intact, had done her best to bully the Greeks, and was known to be getting ready to put military pressure on them. Though a powerful British fleet was concentrated in the Eastern Mediterranean, its task might have been rendered very heavy if the shores of Greece and the Greek islands had been available for enemy operations against it; and the maintenance of supplies for the growing British forces in Egypt might have become difficult.

These possibilities were fully understood throughout the Balkans and in the Middle East—more fully, perhaps, than by our own people at home. Then Hitler blundered badly. In his eagerness to gain the co-operation of the Vichy Government against Britain, he ignored Italian claims to big slices of French territory, and put Mussolini's nose out of joint. Hoping to 'appease' Mussolini, Hitler hurried to Florence. But before the two supreme gangsters could meet, at midday on October 28, Mussolini gave orders for what he meant to be a master-stroke of his own—the sudden attack on Greece, whom he expected to surrender without much ado. The stroke had been prepared with characteristic Mussolinian perfidy—as is abundantly proved by a Greek White Book with an appendix of captured Italian documents, published in facsimile this week.

Mussolini told his Cabinet last week that Italy 'was not prepared' for the Greek war. By way of masking his own responsibility for this alleged unpreparedness—and its consequences—he has got rid of Marshal Badoglio, his Chief of Staff, two or three other soldiers of high rank, and an admiral. The Greek White Book proves, on the contrary, that from mid-June to mid-August Mussolini did his utmost secretly to provoke Greece into giving Italy a pretext for attack, and that from mid-August until October 28 Italian provocation was open and constant. On October 21 the Italian General in command of the Third Alpine Division

sent a secret order to his troops to be ready to 'eliminate' Greek sentinels, to cut telephone lines, to occupy Greek outposts and to capture their garrisons. The essential factor, said this order, is 'surprise.'

Five days later, on October 26, the Italian Minister in Athens, Signor Periti, gave an Italo-Greek dinner at which the Greek and Italian flags were fraternally intertwined. The object of this dinner was to put the Greeks off their guard. At 3 a.m. on October 28 the same Signor Periti summoned the Greek Prime Minister, General Metaxas, from his bed and presented him a three-hour ultimatum demanding Greek assent to the Italian occupation of certain Greek strategic points, which were not specified. The ultimatum was rejected. At 5.30 a.m., before the time-limit had expired, the Italian forces attacked in obedience to an order issued to the troops on October 26—the day of the 'fraternal' dinner in Athens. The order ended with the words: 'Our day has come—we must conquer.'

As an exercise in perfidy Mussolini's intended master-stroke was a masterpiece. Not even Hitler, Ribbentrop and Goebbels combined could have improved upon it. The only trouble was that though the 'day of Italy' had come, the Italian troops did not conquer. They are now struggling desperately to hold the approaches to the Albanian plain that lies to the east of the only two ports remaining in Italian hands, Vallona and Durazzo.

The Greeks have fought marvellously. They have proved that a small nation, inspired by the spirit of freedom, can withstand a more powerful predatory State and vindicate a valiant people's right to stand on a footing of complete moral equality with the greatest nations. No Balkan or Middle-Eastern people that has escaped the clutches of the Dictators will now dare to show itself less stalwart than the Greeks. Even upon France the Greek example will not be lost. Laval and other members of the Vichy Government may have hoped to render the French capitulation less galling to their own people by helping Hitler to overthrow Britain. Now, on the contrary, the Greek example may render intolerable the sense of unnecessary humiliation among the people of France—all the more when they learn that detachments of the Free French Forces have taken part in the British victory over the Italians in Western Egypt.

True though it be that Greek valour might not have prevailed without the prompt and efficient help of the Royal Air Force and the British Navy, it is not less true that without Greek valour our airmen and sailors could not have done much for Greece. As Mr. Winston Churchill told the House of Commons this week, the help given to Greece retarded the British offensive in Western Egypt. Our air strength had again to be brought up to its earlier level. Meanwhile the delay caused some doubt whether the British could take the offensive in Western Egypt and wrest the initiative from Marshal Graziani. Now even this doubt is dispelled; and I am inclined to agree with Turkish opinion that the capture of Sidi Barrani 'may be regarded as a turning-point in the war.'

We must now await the repercussion in Italy of the disasters to Italian arms in Albania and in Egypt. If the Italian people were masters of their own fate to the same extent as they were in March 1896, when defeat at Adowa in Abyssinia caused a popular upheaval and overthrew the powerful Crispi Government, a strong revulsion against Mussolini and Fascism might be expected. But today the Italian people are suffering from the effects of having allowed themselves to be dragooned, spy-ridden and police-ridden for eighteen years. They have been deprived of all means of knowing what was really going on in the outside world. Financially they are ruined. Economically they are weak. And it is not easy to see where, in Italy, leaders are to be found who would enjoy enough popular confidence to guide a second Risorgimento.

Mussolini himself is undoubtedly in a tight place. Should he appeal for German help he would only get it on severe conditions—and, even then, the strong undercurrent of anti-German feeling in Italy might rise to the surface and sweep all before it. Should he attempt to ride out the storm unaided, he might find his Fascist ship of State scuttled from within. What he will do or try to do I should not care to predict. I feel only that the 'day of Italy,' announced in the order to the troops on October 26, has turned out to be a very black day indeed.

Nor is Hitler altogether happy. His speech this week to German munition workers was a very second-rate affair. Into it there crept a note almost of anguish. 'If we lose this fight' he said, 'then it is the end—the end of the German people.'

He has struck this note before, in a different tone. Early in the war he declared that this fight would settle the fate of the German people for a thousand years to come, but he was quick to add that German triumph was assured. He still talks of destroying Britain, in his own good time and with 'unlimited fanaticism.' Of his unlimited fanaticism we feel quite sure. We know he will do his utmost. Yet we are not convinced by his explanation that he did not destroy us last autumn because he was cautious and was waiting for better weather.

Unfortunately I did not hear this speech on the German radio as I have heard most of the others. Friends who did hear it tell me, however, that the cheers of his audience sounded half-hearted and lukewarm. I think Hitler would rather have switched the war over to the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean this winter if he had been able to do so. In this respect Mussolini has let him down. So now he must go on with the Battle of Britain and try to bomb us into surrender while his submarines undertake a counter-blockade. What his spies are telling him we do not know. Two of them were recently caught, and were executed in London this week. But if they are telling him anything like the truth, their reports cannot strengthen his belief that he is within sight of victory over us. The mood of our people is grimmer and more determined than ever. They are utterly resolved to rid Europe and the world of the Nazi scourge, and to build a better and a saner Europe for free men to dwell in.

One of our leading journals has published this week a volume of reports upon the Europe Hitler has enslaved. It is a terrible record. The introduction to it says truly:

'It is a tale of organized pillage, whereby subject populations are robbed and starved for the sustenance of the German war machine; of the suppression of universities, schools, newspapers, and all the organs whereby free peoples maintain the life of the spirit; of deliberate outrage in all the sanctities of faith and patriotism; of the deposition of national leaders and the elevation of traitors; of government by police and spies; of torture and murder for the enslaved who chafe against their chains.'

Alongside of such a Europe a free Britain could hardly exist. However long and hard the struggle may be, the most elementary sense of our own preservation compels us to

withstand and to overthrow the Nazi horror. Yet we are aware that the overthrow of Nazism will only be the beginning of our task. We shall have to deal with a German people, or with German peoples, whose minds have been systematically distorted and perverted. As the same volume of reports puts it: 'What the German leaders have done to German minds presents one of the greatest problems in the reconstruction of Europe after the day of victory. It is hard to know how long will be the period of cleansing and re-educating.'

It is hard to know. And this is one more reason why the problem should be studied without delay, and principles for its solution laid down and made known. I am glad to think that the British Government is now alive to this need, and that before very long the world, including the German and the Italian peoples, will be given at least an inkling of the lines on which we hope gradually to build up the free European commonwealth of the future.

THE BIRTH OF 'LEND-LEASE'

The third week in December brought a very great event—President Roosevelt's proposal to 'cut the financial nonsense' out of the war and to transform the whole question of American aid to Great Britain and the British Commonwealth into 'Lend-Lease.' This struck me as an even bigger thing than the British victory over the Italians in Libya. So I said on December 20:

There is a breath of big things in the world today—big things handled in a big spirit. One of them is the great victory of the Army of the Nile over Mussolini's forces in Western Egypt. I said last week that the true importance of this event was that it gained the initiative for the British and Allied forces and no longer left them on the defensive against the initiative of the enemy. Throughout the past week this advantage has been pressed home and extended. Not only the number of prisoners taken—which by this time may be well over 30,000—but the enormous quantity of stores, equipment, weapons and transport captured, show that the Italian invasion of Egypt had been carefully planned with huge resources and was meant to be a very serious business indeed.

Whatever may be the further course of the fighting, this danger has now been removed. It is a big thing.

Another and perhaps still bigger thing, in its present significance and ultimate consequences, is the proposal of the United States Government to treat Great Britain as the active defender of principles and traditions that are common to her and to the United States. The simplicity of the method by which President Roosevelt suggested that this should be done bears the hallmark of constructive genius. Whoever first thought of it must have a big, straightforward mind. President Roosevelt's idea of cutting out what he called the 'financial nonsense,' and of getting down to realities, would, if Congress and the people of the United States approve of it, transform the whole question of the aid to be given by the United States to the cause for which Great Britain, the British Commonwealth and their Allies are fighting.

The plain realities are that Great Britain, in defending herself, is also defending things that make life worth living for Britons the world over, and for the great majority of the citizens of the North American Republic; that Great Britain and the peoples of the British Commonwealth do not look upon these things solely as their own concern but regard them as the concern of free peoples everywhere; that to succeed in defending these things, and winning victory for them, more and more arms are needed from North American factories; and that the time was in sight when the dollar reserves of Great Britain in the United States and elsewhere would come to an end.

If, therefore, this great matter had been treated as a purely financial question there might have been delay and all kinds of complications arising out of the 'cash and carry' provision of the United States Neutrality Act and other North American enactments. There might even have seemed to be some force in the gibe which Hitler and Mussolini have often launched against what they call the 'pluto-democracies'—that British and American minds were governed solely by financial and 'capitalist' considerations. Now it looks as though these foolish gibes might recoil upon those who used them. There could be no better propaganda for the cause of freedom, and of the democracy which is its political expression, than proof that in its service material and financial considerations count as little with the great democratic

peoples as they have counted in Great Britain since we resolved, by a free act of our elected representatives, to place all our possessions and our lives at the disposal of our National Government for the prosecution of this war against mechanized barbarism and human enslavement.

In the outspoken speech that was delivered for him shortly before his untimely death, Lord Lothian, the late British Ambassador to the United States, assured the citizens of the North American Union that if they should decide to back Great Britain they would not be backing a quitter. Lord Lothian had just returned to Washington from this country, and had been able to see with his own eyes and to hear with his own ears how utterly absent from our minds is any thought of 'quitting.' The very hotel in which he stayed while in London received the attentions of Hitler's bombers. Its staff 'carried on' undismayed—just as millions of other Londoners and inhabitants of Coventry, Birmingham and Bristol carry on, not, indeed, as though nothing had happened but as though something has happened in the world which it is their business to put right. And I should not be surprised if the people of the United States were also determined to carry on with their help to us because they know that we shall not quit and are not going to let Nazi Germany triumph over us and them.

So, it seems, the United States is going to apply the 'good neighbour' policy to the extent of lending us its hose-pipe to help in putting out the fire which the Dictators have started in Europe and Africa, the understanding being that when the fire has been put out we shall return the hose-pipe in good order after having made good use of it. There will be no question of dollar exchange in paying for the aircraft, guns, ships and other war supplies which the 'hose-pipe' principle represents. They will be available for the United States, should the United States ever need them, together with such other lengths of 'hose-pipe' that we in such circumstances might be able to supply. The proposed arrangement is a good illustration of the principle wittily outlined by Mr. Winston Churchill some time ago when he was speaking of the exchange of air and naval bases in British territory for American destroyers, that the affairs of Great Britain and of the United States are going to be 'somewhat mixed up together' for the advantage of both.

Until the 'hose-pipe' scheme has been well worked out on both sides of the Atlantic there will be no need to speculate about its details. It is the thing itself that matters most; and the thing itself strikes me as one of the biggest that has happened in the world for a long time. I wonder what Hitler thinks of it—or Mussolini, if that harassed misleader of the Italian people now has time to think. If I were in their place or places I imagine I should feel a little uncomfortable. I should not worry so much over the prospect that the aid of the United States to Britain would turn the scale against me in the near future. I should worry about its moral effect upon peoples who are wavering and are beginning to doubt whether the Berlin-Rome Axis is not cracking and whether all the spokes in the wheels of the triumphal Nazi-Fascist car, which the Axis was meant to keep running smoothly, are still unbroken or unbent. Just as the victory of General Sir Archibald Wavell's forces in North-East Africa has put new heart into all the peoples of the Near and Middle East, so the 'hose-pipe' arrangement between the United States and Great Britain will send shivers of fear down the spines of the Dictators, and a thrill of hope through the minds of their victims. In the moral balance-sheet of the war an asset of inestimable worth has been added to the British and Allied cause.

What will, what can, Hitler do to neutralize this asset or, at least, to lessen its value before its practical effects come fully into play? I have given more than once my own opinion, for what it may be worth, that he must try to do something soon, and that the only direction in which he can hope to do anything that would be likely to alter the position to his own advantage would be to strike hard and swiftly at Great Britain by every means at his disposal. He cannot hope now to regain for Italy what she has already lost in North Africa. He can hardly hope for some months to come to undo what the Greeks have done, and are still doing, to Mussolini's forces in Albania. Hitler may or may not have a certain number of troops in Southern Italy. If so, they might be used to stiffen Italian resistance. But it is doubtful whether this would be looked upon by Hitler or his military advisers as a decisive event. For similar reasons a plan to send German troops through Spain, attractive though it might be if it were easily practicable, could hardly have more than a

nuisance value in the present emergency. It would, besides, run counter to the time-honoured German strategic principle of striking at the chief centre of enemy resistance at the right moment in overwhelming force. For these and other reasons I think there is much to be said for the warning given this week by men so well informed as Mr. Cordell Hull, the United States Secretary of State, by Lord Beaverbrook, the British Minister of Aircraft Production, and on Thursday by Mr. Winston Churchill, that a German attempt to crush British resistance in Great Britain, by invasion and otherwise, is highly probable in the near future.

When I say that this prospect does not appal us I do not mean that we take it lightly. We are not sure that even in his efforts to overwhelm us by air attack last August and September Hitler put forth all the strength he could command. If he thought he could crush us with anything less than all his strength he underestimated the gallantry of our airmen and the efficiency of their weapons. Since then he has intensified what he calls his submarine counter-blockade. The latest week for which the figures of our losses have been issued show it to have been a bad week for us and a relatively good week for Hitler. More than 100,000 tons of British and Allied shipping were lost. These losses may in future be less or they may be more serious. They have not crippled us and, soberly considered, they are not likely to cripple us. But they represent a real danger to which we are fully alive and which we shall strain every nerve to meet. It is good to be told on the authority of Lord Beaverbrook that notwithstanding all Hitler's bombings of this country we are now stronger in the air than we were when the Battle of Britain began, that the output of our aircraft factories increased week by week in October and November, and was higher during the first week of December than it was during the last week of November. This proves that our workmen and workwomen are really putting their backs into the job, and that the job is being well done.

All the same we know that we are up against a desperate gangster who is fighting for his very life and for the infamous system of tyranny that he has forced upon Europe. We expect him to stick at nothing—and we still expect him to fail. It is in this spirit that we watch what looks like the tragi-comedy of which one or two scenes have been played this week at

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Vichy. Marshal Pétain dismisses Laval and shuts him up. Abetz, Hitler's right-hand man in Paris, goes to Vichy with an armed guard and says something that induces Marshal Pétain to release Laval and to confer with him and Abetz. Flandin, Laval's appointed successor, goes to bed with influenza. Abetz and Laval then go back to Paris.

What does it all mean? Nobody whom I know has been able to tell me, and I think it quite futile to guess. The only conclusion that one seems entitled to draw from the known facts is that Hitler was planning or plotting to bring France into his scheme for decisive action against Great Britain but that hitherto there has been a hitch in his proposed arrangements. Whether or not he can smooth out the hitch remains to be seen. I have good reason to believe that the great majority of the French people are hoping and praying for a British victory.

Taking things all round in this week of big things I am more persuaded than ever that these French prayers and hopes will be fulfilled. There may be much loss and suffering ahead of us. We expect them. We shall not be daunted by them; and we shall pull through.

THE BALANCE OF 1940

In my last talk of the year I summed up, on December 27, 1940, my general impressions of fourteen months of warfare. Towards the end of this talk I thought it right to say what I knew of Lord Halifax whose appointment to succeed Lord Lothian as British Ambassador to the United States had caused misgivings on both sides of the Atlantic. I could say what I said the more frankly because I had never hidden my disagreement with many features of the policy which Mr. Neville Chamberlain, and Lord Halifax as Foreign Secretary, had pursued since the resignation of Mr. Anthony Eden in 1938. I knew that my talk would be heard in the United States as well as in Canada and throughout the British Commonwealth. It said:

This has been Christmas week in the year 1940. Within another week we shall have begun the New Year. What 1941 may bring none of us can know. Yet if we look back over 1940 we find good grounds for confidence and hope. The

first six months of the dying year were filled with what Mr. Winston Churchill called a 'cataract of disaster,' or what Hitler had reason to think a triumphal procession. One drop of gall alone marred the sweetest of the cup of glory Hitler was able to quaff. It was his failure to crush the British Expeditionary Force at Dunkirk. The ensuing collapse of France may have helped him to swallow the gall without too wry a grimace. He may have thought it weak wormwood alongside of the bitterness we should feel at the crumpling up of our chief ally, and at the disastrous change in our prospects wrought by the loss of the French Navy, of the French Channel and Atlantic ports, and of the French positions and resources in North Africa.

He knew too little of our people and of British history to understand that the native pluck of our common, seafaring folk which brought about the 'miracle of Dunkirk' was, in our eyes, the first pledge of final success, the harbinger of ultimate victory.

So he gave us time to gird up our loins and prepare to meet him wherever he might choose to strike. In the twinkling of an eye, as it seemed, Great Britain was transformed into a fortress bristling with defences of all kinds against invasion. New armies were enrolled, trained, armed and equipped. The Air Force, though heavily outnumbered, grew in strength from day to day—though not in valour or efficiency, for these were already incomparable. The Navy and the men of the Mercantile Marine kept ceaseless watch. Thus it came about that when Hitler's self-appointed hour struck for his vaunted crushing of Britain it sounded the knell of his mightiest air squadrons and of the flotillas and hosts he had gathered to invade us. We may not yet have won the last round of the Battle of Britain; but Hitler has, so far, no round to his credit.

The outer world looked on in trepidation and, at first, without faith in our power to withstand the mechanized Attila before whom country after country in Europe had gone down in utter defeat. Even in London friendly foreign observers, who thought they knew England, believed we were half-beaten and that the democracy which we were supposed to be defending was dead in our land. We knew, on the contrary, that we were beginning to beat the enemy, and that democracy is never so potent or vigorous as when it

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gets together of its own free choice and acts as one man under a chosen and trusted leader. Then came the 'splendid barter' of United States destroyers for British naval and air bases, the setting up of the North American Defence Council by the United States and Canada, the Prime Minister's reflection that the affairs of the United States and of the British Commonwealth would be 'somewhat mixed up together' in future, and that Anglo-American co-operation would 'just keep rolling along.'

We know, and Hitler knows, that it will not roll to the advantage of tyrannical, police-ridden, spy-infested systems, and that it bears on its broad bosom nothing that will conduce to the greatest good of the greatest gangster. We have drawn comfort, too, from the well-merited mishaps that have befallen the lesser gangster—he who, resentful of the greater gangster's infidelity to the principle of honour among thieves, sought to do a little smart thieving on his own account at the cost of the Greeks. How can we not feel a thrill of pride and pleasure at the sight of a valiant little people rendering to human freedom a service not unworthy to stand beside the service of the ancient Greeks when they broke at Salamis the might of the Persian tyrant!

To crown the record of the second half of 1940, to signalize and symbolize the stemming of the 'cataract of disaster,' came the other day the magnificent victories of General Wavell's Army of the Nile. This army is in itself a token of the better world that is to be. In its ranks are not only British troops but divisions from Australia, New Zealand and India, with units of free Frenchmen and other Allies. Around Abyssinia the forces of South Africa, Rhodesia, with the aid of African regiments equally brave, are playing their part in teaching the lesser gangster—and some others—the salutary lesson that crime does not pay, that retribution awaits those who massacre the weak, spurn justice and make a mock of righteousness. Whatever trials 1941 may hold in store, the uplifting hours of November and December 1940 will not easily fade from our memory.

On Christmas Eve I, too, had an uplifting hour of more modest proportions. In a country house, one of the 'stately homes of England,' which on the outbreak of war was transformed into a maternity hospital by the great lady who presides over it, some scores of Polish airmen gathered for a

Polish Christmas with Polish food, and sang songs of the Poland that is 'not yet lost.' A year ago most of these gallant fellows were in concentration camps somewhere in Roumania whence they made their way to France and, after the French collapse, to England. Several of them had not met before. Yet they were a band of brothers who sang like a well-trained choir, with fire and fervour. Hitler may not know how many of his airmen have been clawed down from the sky or been driven into the sea by these young Polish fighters who, like their Czechoslovak comrades, have added pages of imperishable lustre to their countries' annals.

Nor, in drawing up the moral balance-sheet of 1940, would it be right or just to forget the presence among us of volunteer fliers from the United States, the 'American Eagles,' who are proudly asserting their claim to help in holding the air of liberty against the truculent tyranny of destruction. They, like individual citizens of the United States who have showered gifts of arms, munitions, ambulances, field-glasses and comforts upon us, feel that today the high-hearted world of civilized humanity is engaged in vindicating on an even more majestic scale the motto of the United States itself—*e pluribus unum!* It will be, it must be, a unity in diversity, a linking together by goodwill of many races and many lands in support of the principle that righteousness must be mighty if it would prevail over the infamous doctrine that might is right. Of all the events of 1940 this moral reawakening of the civilized world to the nature of civilization itself is surely the greatest.

At such a moment the choice of a British Ambassador to Washington, as successor to the late Lord Lothian and to carry on the work to which he devoted his manifold abilities, was a matter of grave concern to the British Government and people. In choosing Lord Halifax, the Prime Minister, who knows all the circumstances, must be given credit for having acted wisely. It has been said in some quarters, both here and overseas, that a faint odour, and odium, of 'appeasement' still clings to Lord Halifax's mantle. On this point such testimony as I can bear will not, I think, be misplaced. For many years I have opposed, criticized and even denounced the tendencies that culminated in attempts to 'appease' ravening wolves. But it would be contrary to the spirit of British public life not to recognize the good faith,

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and earnest devotion to another conception of duty, of men with whom one disagreed. I know that Lord Halifax felt the alternatives which confronted the British Government in September 1938, when Mr. Neville Chamberlain flew to see Hitler at Berchtesgaden, Godesberg and Munich, to have been almost equally intolerable. To assent to the sacrifice of one small democratic nation seemed to him hardly less repugnant than it would be to expose Britain, unready and ill-informed, to a sudden, devastating attack that might have sealed the doom of freedom in Europe for many a year. What we have since learned of the unwillingness of French leaders then to stand resolutely by our side against Hitler, has bestowed a measure of retrospective sanction upon the decisions of the responsible men who, like Lord Halifax, trusted the larger hope and were fain, even at the cost of pangs of conscience, to spare Europe and Britain the ordeal of ravaging war.

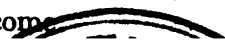
Of these things Lord Halifax has spoken in private with disarming candour. He won the personal respect of critics who still disagree with him. When the Government of the United States and the citizens of the North American Union come to know him by closer contact I think he will command their respect also and, perhaps, their admiration in a degree that will surprise them. In this country he has often met in informal intercourse representatives of North American newspapers who were not disposed to be respecters of persons merely because persons were British Secretaries of State. In every instance, I believe, they have found Lord Halifax more human, less assuming, humbler of mind and more valiant for truth than they expected to find him. And now that he has resigned the seals of his office to Mr. Anthony Eden, and has exchanged for them the status of Ambassador to the greatest English-speaking democracy, the qualities of mind and character that have marked his career in the past will, I feel sure, find ample and convincing scope in the weighty task now entrusted to him.

Of Mr. Eden, who now returns to the Foreign Office, it is unnecessary to say more than that the circumstances in which he left that Department of State, and the good work he has since done as Secretary of the Dominions and as Secretary for War, combine to give him an authority he might not otherwise have possessed. He left office, with his Under-Secretary,

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Lord Cranborne, because they both felt that Mussolini, the lesser gangster, could not be trusted to keep his word, that guarantees were wanted because an evil tree is apt to bear evil fruit. Mussolini has since proved them to have been abundantly right; and there is ground for deep satisfaction that two men, still young, with this record to their credit, should now stand beside Mr. Winston Churchill in the handling of the hard problems that 1941 and the following years must bring. Nor is it irrelevant that unclouded affection and mutual respect should govern the relations between the outgoing and the returning British Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs.

So we can look back upon the second half of 1940, and forward into the weeks and months of the coming year, with faith undimmed and purpose unshakable. The course of 1941 cannot be smooth. The forces of evil are still unvanquished. They will be used against us and our Allies with all the ingenuity, maybe with all the devilry, that gangster desperation can suggest, command or invent. Not without blood and tears will triumph over them be gained, nor without grievous suffering and lamentable loss. All will be stoutly borne for the sake of the cause that has inspired us hitherto and will inspire us increasingly as its grandeur and nobility stand more fully revealed. If the foe be strong, we and our friends are not weak. Terror has left us not, indeed, unscathed, yet unmoved. One day, sooner perhaps than the caitiff foe imagines, the terror of retribution will scorch and burn and devour the brutal hordes who still do his bidding—while resurgent hope, and the dawn of redemption from nameless woe, will set aflame the hearts of his victims and light such a beacon as will illumine the world for many a year to come.



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